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GLOVERSON

AND HIS

SILENT PARTNERS.

BY

RALPH KEELER.

BOSTON:

LEE AND SHEPARD.

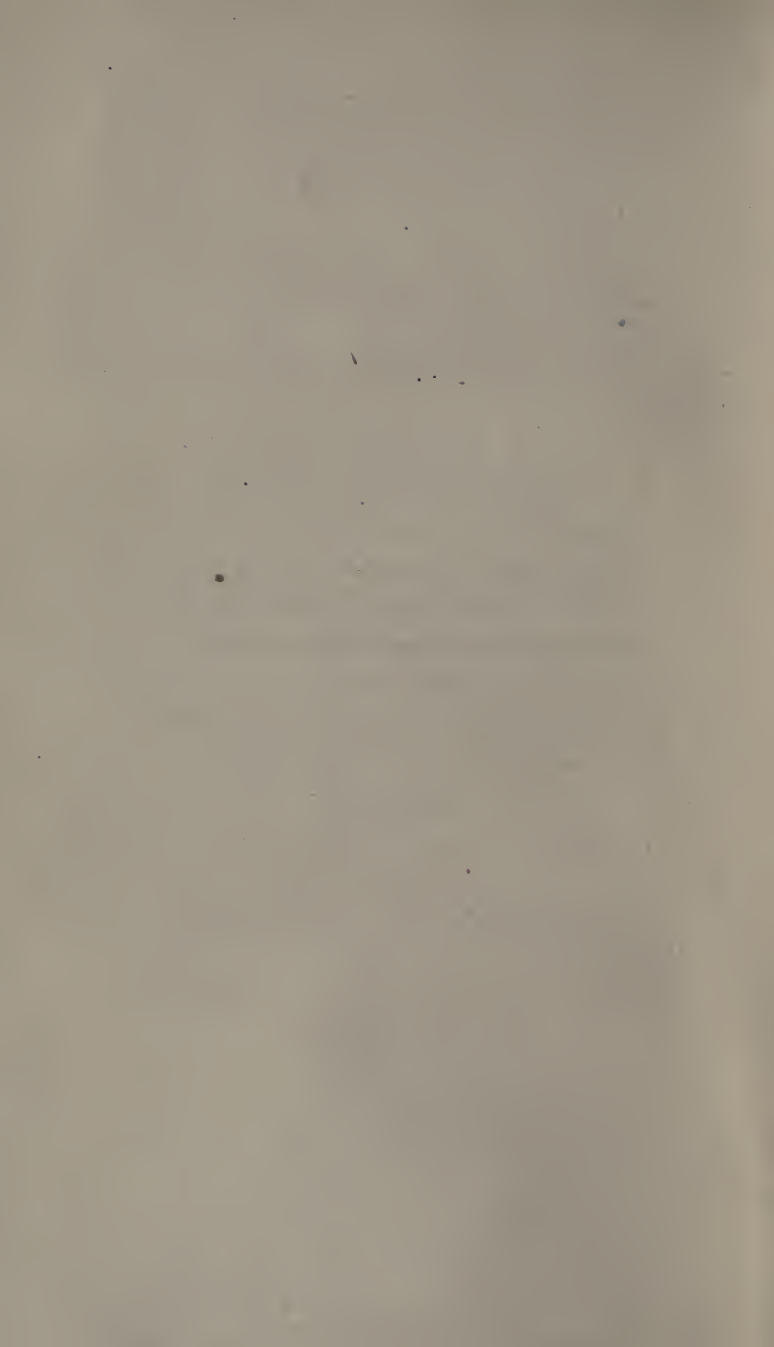
1869.

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RALPH KEELER,
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RIVERSIDE, CAMBRIDGE:
STEREOTYPED AND PRINTED BY
H. O. HOUGHTON AND COMPANY.

TO THE
HON. GEORGE P. MARSH,
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR AT THE COURT OF ITALY,
BY WHOSE KINDNESS THE AUTHOR WAS ENABLED TO COMPLETE
HIS "BAREFOOTED" TOUR OF EUROPE, ON ONE HUN-
DRED AND EIGHTY-ONE DOLLARS IN CURRENCY,

This Story,
LAID IN SCENES SO LITTLE KNOWN TO THE WORLD OF FACT OR
FICTION, IS GRATEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.



CONTENTS.



	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE HOUSE OF GLOVERSON AND CO.—WITH ESPECIAL REFER- ENCE TO ITS CASHIER	9
CHAPTER II.	
OLD FRIENDS	18
CHAPTER III.	
A SOCIAL EVENING	26
CHAPTER IV.	
THE STEAMER	39
CHAPTER V.	
MISS SOPHIA GARR DEVELOPS INTO AN ANGEL	43
CHAPTER VI.	
UN BALLO IN MASCHERA	53
CHAPTER VII.	
AMOS DIXON IS INTRODUCED TO PESTALOZZI, AND HIS SYSTEM	67
CHAPTER VIII.	
PREPARATORY.	77
CHAPTER IX.	
IN WHICH THE UNITIES ARE VIOLATED	84

CHAPTER X.

	PAGE
FOR WHICH LOVE IS MOSTLY RESPONSIBLE	96

CHAPTER XI.

BECKONING	108
---------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

MR. DIXON MAKES A BAD IMPRESSION	114
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

FANTASTICAL AND GARRESQUE	122
-------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEREIN A SIMPLE QUESTION BECOMES HARD TO ANSWER	135
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.

MR. DIXON MAKES A GOOD IMPRESSION	140
---	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. ARCHIBALD BEANSON	148
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SMOOTHER TIDE	157
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW SOPHIA EARNS HER SALARY	163
---------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

AMOS DIXON RECEIVES A THUNDERBOLT	169
---	-----

CHAPTER XX.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MR. A. DIXON	176
--	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

POP !	182
-----------------	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER XXII.

	PAGE
KARL SCHMERLING	195

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUT OF THE SHADOW	207
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

MISS SOPHIA GARR ENGAGES IN THE STUDY OF THE LAW . . .	221
--	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GALA AFTERNOON.	233
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERIORS OF TWO MINDS	244
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

STOCKS	253
------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LONE STRUGGLE	260
---------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN THE LISTS.	272
-----------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

UP THE STEEPS WITH GLOVERSON	284
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXI.

AMOS DIXON PROVIDES FOR TWO PERSONS	302
---	-----

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT THE GRAVE	316
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT THE ALTAR	325
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXIV.

	PAGE
HENRY COMES	343

CHAPTER XXXV.

DRIFTING	346
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FINALE, IN WHICH THE WHOLE FIRM PARTICIPATES . . .	357
--	-----

GLOVERSON AND HIS SILENT PARTNERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE OF GLOVERSON AND CO. — WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS CASHIER.

AMOS DIXON, aged twenty-eight years and one month, was neither tall nor short. He was one of that kind of people who always look like somebody else — one of those who, at an evening sociable, being present, would be forgotten; and, being absent, would be inquired about. In fact, Amos Dixon was calculated to be, like an acquaintance of Voltaire's, conspicuous by his absence.

But the Great Publisher of men and sparrows does not stereotype his editions. So, of course, Amos Dixon could lay claim to certain little peculiarities, which circumscribed him, as a great irregular polygon, within the circumference of his own circle. .

For instance, the clothes of Amos Dixon — more than any in your fine descriptions — seemed a part of him. No matter who his merchant tailor, the back of his coat invariably led a nomadic existence, camping anywhere but on the place for which it was designed. Those creases, characteristic of the front parts of ready-made pantaloons, when new, were always observable upon the

legs of Amos ; remaining there, if left by the pressing-iron, or coming of their own accord, on some mysterious principle, akin to that by which lint settles along the inner seams of a garment.

He had never asked for the lucrative place he now filled. He had served in lesser capacities, so long and faithfully, that it had been fairly thrust upon him. Amos Dixon had lately been appointed cashier of that prosperous jobbing-house, Gloverson & Co.'s, Front Street, — a firm at this day too well known in San Francisco, and indeed, throughout all the Pacific States, to need any extended mention here. In its particular line, that house was then, as it is now, ensconced behind the Ossa and Pelion of Alcatraz and Fort Point — one of the demi-gods of trade ; and Amos Dixon (ruining utterly, as he does, this classical figure) was its monetary hierophant, and occupied the highest and most confidential tripod in its counting-room.

It might have been design, or it might have been a freak ; or, as strange as it may seem, it might have been downright modesty, on the part of Mr. Gloverson, the head of the firm, that he had never, even in the presence of his cashier, alluded to his silent partner or partners. The business was done, and the books were kept, in the name of Gloverson & Co., from year to year ; and that was the end of it. Some people affirmed that the "Co." was a New York house in the same line of trade ; others contended that fat old Andrew Gloverson was the whole firm himself ; adding, jocosely, that he was certainly big enough. Mr. Dixon, however, having a shrewd idea that there was no mystery whatever in the matter, minded his own business and did his work to the best of his ability.

And here he is alone in his little room on Clary Street, after business hours on a Saturday afternoon. This apartment of bed, table, and wash-stand, he rented when he could afford no other; and he cannot afford to leave it now, for the precious memories he would leave with it. He is sitting with one hand under his chin, and his elbow on the table.

Looking into the kindly eyes and not otherwise remarkable face of Amos Dixon, you would not at first imagine that the poor fellow is deformed. Should you, indeed, penetrate several inches beneath his wrinkled and ill-setting waistcoat, you would not be any the wiser.

Yet Amos Dixon *is* deformed, with a deformity more frequent than the sympathy for it. The hand of the world is raised oftener against unfortunates with his peculiar affliction than against all your *diables boiteux*, your wicked dwarfs, and your long-suffering hunchbacks.

Amos Dixon is afflicted with a large heart.

Still, with his hand under his chin, he thinks how his present success would have comforted and delighted his poor mother now dead. Then he thinks of the early struggles succeeding his advent in California, and how glad he is that she had never known of his being penniless and friendless so far away from her. Then he thinks of his first connection as porter with the house of Gloverson & Co.; then, how artful and clever it is in him to have retained this little room, in the back street, where, in the time gone by, he had written letters to his mother, and read hers over and over again.

A loud thump brought the foregoing reverie to a sudden close. Amos jumped to his feet, and opened the door of his little room.

"Why, Mr. Dixon, what on earth ails you? . I've

knocked three times," said his little landlady, "yes, three mortal times, and here's Auntie Owen waiting down in the yard all this while. She wouldn't come in. She wants to see you. I think she's in trouble."

"In trouble!" exclaimed Amos.

"Yes — now stop, Mr. Dixon, and put on your coat, and take your hat. What will the neighbors think? There, now go!"

"Good afternoon, Auntie Owen," said Amos, as he reached the yard, and looked inquiringly into the face of an old woman — a face in whose soft wrinkles any one might read, even through the cloud there, a mild homily on loving-kindness. What must have been the light brown hair of the spring-time, was still the light brown hair of the winter of her years. The snows of age had drifted sparsely above a brow of so much sunshine.

"Good afternoon," repeated Amos; "how much shall I let you have? This is all I have with me. Will it be enough till Monday?"

"It isn't money, Mr. Dixon, it isn't money," and a tear trembled on the lid of Auntie Owen. "Will you come home with me, Mr. Dixon?"

Without saying a word, Amos opened the gate and closed it behind the old lady and himself, as they issued forth upon the sidewalk.

On the same little street, but on the opposite side, and at a distance of about a block, they entered another gate, and the little brown house which was the home of Auntie Owen.

"Sit in that chair, Mr. Dixon; that is the one Henry likes the best — and I know he is coming. There, no, no; no money, Mr. Dixon. Henry always leaves me plenty. He is freight-clerk, now; he will be purser of

the steamer, next year, if he — if — Oh! Henry *is* coming, don't you think?"

"Certainly. Calm yourself, Auntie Owen. Henry will come."

"How much I thank you, sir; that was what I wanted of you; I wanted to hear you say that — but," and there was a deeper cloud passed over the old lady's face, "but the steamer was never so late before. You are sure she has not been heard from yet?"

"Yes, Auntie Owen; but I will go to the office of the company this very afternoon and learn all I can."

"God bless you, Mr. Dixon — yes, Henry is coming, I am sure Henry is coming."

"I don't know why it should happen so," mused Amos aloud, "but I was thinking of my own mother just as you called for me this afternoon."

"Your own mother? Where is she?"

"In Heaven, I believe — she is dead."

"Dead? dead! Somehow, I am afraid of that word lately. Ah! what will my Henry do when I am gone? And he is coming, don't you think? For he's the only child that's left me. I know what it is to be separated from my son, but death," and a tremor that seemed to commence in her voice, spread over Auntie Owen's entire frame, "death is a stranger separation — do you feel chilly, too, Mr. Dixon?"

"There, there," said Amos, rising to go; "do not let it trouble you any more. The steamer may have been telegraphed by this time. I will go to the office and find out."

Auntie Owen watched him till he was out of sight.

At the office of the company, nothing had been heard of the missing steamer. Amos could see that the agent

endeavored to conceal his anxiety. Returning toward Aunt Owen's, the poor fellow was studying intently how he could comfort the old lady without being guilty of falsehood, when, on Market Street, he came very near colliding with a young lady of about thirty summers, who was coming in an opposite direction. Even then, he did not look up, till he was fairly pulled up by the ears, figuratively speaking, for a voice said: —

“How do you do, Mr. Dixon?”

He now seemed to recollect that he had seen something trying to get out of his way; and the first act of his returning presence of mind was to understand the lady to say: —

“What are you doing, Mr. Dixon?”

“That's it — what *am* I doing! Excuse me, I never” —

Here followed a host of apologies, and, after the apologies, more consciousness.

“Why, Miss Garr!” exclaimed Amos, for the first time recognizing a slight acquaintance.

“No apology is necessary, Mr. Dixon. The offense would have been in your passing without looking at me,” said the lady, with a seductive smile.

“You are very kind, Miss Garr, but you see” —

“I tell you it is no matter whatever; but, to make up, you must come a ways with me.”

“Really, Miss Garr” —

“Not another word, I command you!” interposed Mr. Dixon's slight acquaintance, in the manner of a queen of Babylon. “Come right along, sir.”

Amos saw an excuse for delaying the bad news he must bear to Aunt Owen, and — obeyed. The two proceeded across Montgomery and down Second Street.

Miss Sophia Garr had confided to a particular friend, on the very day of her introduction to Mr. Dixon, that she looked upon him as "a rising young man." In fact, she had a higher opinion of his position and prospects, than did Amos himself.

Now this was perfectly natural. Had not Miss Sophia Garr come, in her solitary maidenhood, from the bleak hills of Maine, for the gold that is supposed to be hidden in the bleak hills of California? She could not mine for it, it is true, in the gulches and river-beds, owing to a popular prejudice against woman's rights; but, then, there was a liberal school fund to delve in. In the horticulture of the young idea, she saw her silver mine, and in the affections of men, "a place for the gold where they fine it."

As a teacher, Miss Garr had succeeded in laying by quite a little sum of money, during the six years of her residence on the shores of the Pacific; but, though she had "prospected" assiduously all these seasons, her gold mining had as yet been unsuccessful. The affections of men she had come to consider more like quicksilver; though she still hoped to find the hundred-and-fifty-pound ingot of a husband.

Miss Sophia Garr wore ready-made cloaks.

There are people in San Francisco who shop and promenade and reign on the cheaper thoroughfares, as Kearny and Second Streets; scarcely ever appearing on the fashionable *Boulevard des Italiens* of the Pacific. Miss Garr showed her genius for combination, in that she shopped on Second Street, and promenaded Montgomery.

As to figure, Sophia was only moderately proportioned. The California winds had not dealt tenderly with her

complexion. Her lips were thin, her nose sharp; and her eyes looked as if they had been tanned to match her face. To sum up all, Miss Garr was not pretty. But what did that matter to her? She was in the conservative darkness of so many of her sex: she did not know it.

"You are going to call upon me, of course, Mr. Dixon," continued the subject of the foregoing description. "You *don't know* how anxious I am to see more of you."

"Oh! yes, yes," exclaimed Amos, suddenly roused again from his thoughts of Auntie Owen.

Turning down Folsom Street, they pursued their way, talking not the airy nothings of ordinary converse. No, this was real pick-axe work to Miss Sophia Garr. She was "prospecting" for her future gold mine, and her hundred-and-fifty-pound ingot.

They finally parted before the door of one of those princely mansions in that quarter of the city, Miss Garr having iterated her request for Mr. Dixon to call upon her.

After she had entered, Amos turned and noted the house and grounds attentively. "Well," said he to himself, "there is one thing I am sure of, my new friend lives in fine style — an elegant house, an elegant house!"

At that moment, a little wild bird from an acacia, in front of the house, set up a song that filled the whole lawn with a lovely *staccato* of crystal echoes. It was sweeter than the elaborate efforts of pipe or viol, because God's own minstrelsy, by a troubadour of nature.

Now Amos was not at all given to poetical things, and probably never before in his life had noticed the song of a wild bird. But there was something so exquisite in this; breaking in, as it did, on the stillness of a summer afternoon; rising from the little throat, a full fountain

of glorious music, scattering its spray of melody everywhere, that even Amos stopped and listened, and, to this day, he has not forgotten the pleasant thrill it gave him.

Turning leisurely back Folsom Street, the subject of Aunty Owen's anxiety again took possession of his mind. He could still see, in imagination, the poor old woman looking after him from the door of the little brown house, just as his own mother had looked tearfully after him, when he had taken leave of her for the long journey to this golden land, years ago. There might be better news by this time. The steamer might have been telegraphed. Clinging to this mere shred of hope, Amos pursued his way back, through the labyrinth of streets, to the steamship office.

CHAPTER II.

OLD FRIENDS.

THE succeeding Monday morning was as sunny and cheerful as all summer mornings are in California. At an office window in Montgomery Street, large piles of gold and "greenbacks" were already displayed. Behind these was also displayed, at a desk, the short, wiry figure of a man, in his rapt eagerness, climbing rather than poring over a large Sales-book. The sun, streaming through the gilt legend, "George Lang, Stock and Money Broker," on the window, gave a metallic tinge to the sallowness of this man, and especially lit up the campaign going on in what might be termed the Low Countries of his weazen face — that is, his compressed lips bent, in mighty struggle, to meet the tip of his long-peaked nose. The parched border-land of the upper lip was sparsely wooded by a heather of scrubby moustache, which served all the purpose of bristling *chevaux de frise*, in repressing forays from either side. So the nose never quite reached the under lip, and the under lip never got quite across the border to the nose. It was a moment of desperate conflict when an armistice was sounded thus: —

"Good morning, Mr. Shallop."

"Good morning, sir," and the belligerent lips of Mr. Shallop parted in a knowing smile.

This latter greeting was addressed to the handsomer

of the two gentlemen who had just entered, arm in arm, — the one with black eyes and elegant moustache, — Mr. Nelson Shallop's employer; in a word, Mr. George Lang himself. The eyes of Shallop, the faithful clerk, stealing restlessly over his Sales-book, now careered from the face of Mr. Lang to that of the tall, slender gentleman who accompanied him. The cast in one of Mr. Shallop's eyes, at this moment, was plainly visible.

"Anything special, Mr. Lang?" and the same belligerent lips parted again with the same knowing smile.

"No, not now, Mr. Shallop," replied the stock and money broker, cashing his clerk's smile at sight, with an approving nod; and Mr. Lang ushered the tall, slender gentleman into the back office.

"Karl, my good fellow," said the broker, closing the door of the little sanctum, smiling, and pointing to a most luxurious lounge, "sit down, sit down; we shall be alone here." Taking a seat opposite him, Mr. Lang continued, "You can, as I have said, soon make yourself rich in this country, with your little fortune of twenty thousand dollars, but," here the broker puffed two or three times at his cigar, "but, Karl, let me recommend you to use great caution."

"George," said the tall, slender gentleman, removing his cigar from his thin lips, "George, you know I did not come to America to get rich. I sold my vineyard in the Rheinpfalz, and came here because it is the land of liberty — the home of Washington."

George Lang fell to making smoke rings, as he thought to himself how, in the old Burschen days, at the University of Heidelberg, he had talked the same talk with this same friend and fellow student, about freedom and all that, and joined voices with him, too, in

those sentimental melodies of the Fatherland. Then, with one fell breath, blowing destruction to all the smoke-rings he had made, he wondered how he could have been — how any one can be — so visionary as to refuse to turn an honest penny.

“Karl von Schmerling,” said the broker, looking his old friend curiously in the face, “you are a walking student-song — a tangible spirit of the Beer-Kneipe. You always did speak better English than I do, so I don’t see that your hunting tour across the Plains, or your life in the bustle of New York has done you the least bit of good. You are a dreamer, and you know it.”

“Be what I may, George, I am no longer a *von*. I have left my title with my barony. Who would have a coronet in the country of Franklin, unless it were, like his, wrought of thunder-bolts?”

“Karl Schmerling, then!” The laugh which accompanied this exclamation was just a little forced on the part of Lang. “But *citizen* Schmerling would not wish his money to lie idle?”

“No,” said Karl, with great frankness, “and it has not been idle, only since I brought it to California. I was very glad to get six per cent. a year of a responsible house in New York. I could have got only four per cent. in Frankfort-on-the-Main.”

“Why, my dear fellow!” exclaimed the broker, and a sudden light spread over his countenance at this innocence in monetary affairs. There is no generous rain behind the summer lightning of some climates; and there was something peculiarly dry and cheerless in the bright black eyes of George Lang at this moment. “Why, my dear fellow,” he exclaimed, “you should not be contented with less than two per cent. a month in this land of gold.”

"*Per centum*, George, is a piece of Latin that always bores me. I don't think you will find it in Horace, or anywhere out of an author of the Brazen Age."

At the word "Brazen," the stock broker started slightly. It might have been at the shadow of his own thought, however, as he saw no substance for his apprehension in the face of his friend; or could it have been the quick knock at the door which startled Mr. Lang?

"Reg'lar down! Opposition gone up ten!" exclaimed Mr. Nelson Shallop, who, having given the quick knock aforesaid, had stuck his bristling head through a crack in the door.

"What? Anything heard from the steamer?" and the broker sprang to his feet.

"The revenue cutter's returned, sir," replied Mr. Shallop, in his brisk, business way, "and has seen or heard nothing of her."

"Is all our stock in the Regular line sold?" demanded Lang.

"No, sir."

"Sell it for anything you can get. Here Shallop, wait a moment," and Lang lowered his voice, so that his clerk only heard him say, "keep all the Opposition we have. Needn't buy any more; we have enough."

"Very well, sir," and Mr. Shallop was gone.

"It is a sad thing to think of," observed the broker, seating himself opposite Schmerling again, "but you see this missing steamer is of the Regular line, and, if she is really lost, a great deal of money will be made on the stock of the Opposition line."

"I hope she will not be lost," rejoined Karl.

"So do I," said Lang.

There was more smoking than talking done for a little

while now. Mr. George Lang was the first to break the silence.

"There are many ways of making money very fast here," he said, — "the mines, for instance. You have certainly heard, Karl, of the sudden fortunes made in California mines. Now, there is our mine, the 'Dorcas,' — I could probably get you a chance in it."

"Yes, yes, George; but mining seems so unnatural to me — uprooting God's beautiful earth. I cannot help connecting it with the work of evil geni. There is certainly something demoniac about it."

"But the 'Dorcas' mine, Karl, the 'Dorcas' " —

There came another quick knock, and Mr. Shallop, thrusting his head and one hand through a small opening in the door of the private office, said in his rasping voice, "Here's a dispatch, sir."

"What?" asked Lang; "the steamer telegraphed?"

"Guess not," was Mr. Shallop's knowing reply, as he retired.

George Lang tore open the envelope, and, hurriedly reading the contents, passed the dispatch over to Mr. Schmerling. It contained the startling information from the manager of the "Dorcas" mine, that a ledge had been "struck" so amazingly rich as to treble the value of the original stock.

It was rather fortunate for the broker that Karl Schmerling was not acquainted with the hand-writing of Mr. Nelson Shallop; for there was a striking resemblance between the business calligraphy of the dispatch, and that of the Sales-book in the front office. But Karl, knowing nothing of this, of course congratulated his old friend on this good fortune. Whereupon Lang volunteered the further information that he had bought into

the "Dorcas," only the week before, that he hoped soon to have a controlling influence in the company, and that he would then give Schmerling an opportunity to increase his little fortune of twenty thousand dollars.

"You remember, George," said Schmerling, knocking the ashes from his cigar, and changing his position on the lounge, "you remember the words of our German song, 'Where wine grows there is life.' Now, I have been thinking seriously of buying a vineyard in the Sonoma Valley, and of raising up a little Fatherland of my own."

"Do you intend to visit Sonoma?" asked Lang, as he threw himself on to a settee close by, much easier in body than in mind.

"Yes, and I should like to have you go with me. Can you go?"

George felt easier now.

"I cannot leave my business just at present," he said, "but I shall take a vacation in two or three weeks. In the meantime, I will promise you amusement here in the city. You shall go with me and see a young lady friend of mine, who, like yourself, is an enthusiast in music; you shall join our Philharmonic Society; in fact, I will give you plenty to do."

"Under these circumstances," Karl rejoined, rising and taking one or two turns about the room, "I think I can wait for you." Then he paused by the side of the recumbent George, striking with his cane at a cloud of smoke which had preceded the stock broker's last friendly eruption. Puffing silently at the stump of his own cigar, Karl stood with his eyes fixed straight before him, the smoke-wreaths festooning the avenue through which his thoughts went out into reverie.

Tall, slender, and graceful, too, Karl Schmerling was a pretty picture of his type of manhood. In his light German hair, and the veiled ruddiness of his transparent complexion, taken together with the mild dreaminess of his eyes, there was something suggestive of the mellow tints, and hazy repose of an autumn scene in his own Rhine-land.

"I should like to know what you are thinking of, Karl," observed George Lang, after watching him attentively a few moments. "You are probably wondering how it is that the smoke gets whiter as your cigar gets shorter."

"No, I wasn't; but, now you remind me of it, what is your theory?"

"Why, it's the poetry of the weed! Don't blessings brighten as they take their flight?"

"And you remind me of another thing," Karl added, laughing; "that you used to write poetry. You remember how I like it. The intellects of men have always marched grandest to rhythm."

The broker shook his head and smoked vigorously. "This man is worse than he was at the University," thought Lang to himself. "As still as you keep it, my sly saint, you have had a disastrous affair with some one of your own peasant women; or, may be he has only been disappointed in love with some worthier object," added Mr. Lang, correcting himself. "At any rate, no grown man is really and honestly sentimental who has not sinned or been sinned against!"

And it may be here remarked that Mr. Lang, to his dying day, believed himself right in his theory about his friend; vacillating from one to the other of the foregoing explanations, as to him for the moment seemed justifi-

able by the strange talk or conduct of Schmerling. There are many dreamy people in Germany and out of it, whose minds have not been unhinged by any great shame or sorrow. If, however, a belief in one or the other of Mr. Lang's suppositions will add to the better understanding of Karl, the philosophical reader is welcome to it. Such as Schmerling was in California, he will appear to you in these pages. What happened to him elsewhere is not within the scope of this history.

Karl laid his hand upon the broker's shoulder, "Come now, George, own that you still write poetry. You can not have forgotten. It is part of the soul, you know. In your own despite, you must have reveries that are unwritten poems."

"To tell the truth, Karl, I have not lately had much time for that sort of thing; but," continued Lang, springing to his feet, "I have an idea — a plot, in fact, by which we can take a young lady friend of mine by storm. You improvise music, you know, and sing like — like Saint Cecilia. You shall bring my angel down to me, to me, you understand, and not to yourself."

"Well," said Karl, laughing, "how is this all to be done?"

"Why, you, my improvisatore, are to get up something new for the evening of our visit."

"Then, George, you write me a song and I'll sing it."

"To your own music?"

"I will try."

"Done," said Lang, preparing to start for the Board of Brokers. "What shall be our subject?"

"Friendship," exclaimed Karl, shaking hands as they parted, after the kindly German manner of other days.

"Friendship it is," said George Lang.

CHAPTER III.

A SOCIAL EVENING.

AMOS DIXON used every means he could think of to allay the fears of Aunty Owen. No steamer of that line, he assured the poor old lady, had ever been lost in a storm. If the missing ship had been burned, she would have been seen or heard from somewhere along the coast. She had probably broken a shaft, etc., etc.

"Well, it must be so," Aunty Owen would say; "it must be so, and — and Henry is coming."

She always watched Amos from the door of the little brown house, and, when he was out of sight, cried a great deal more than the honest fellow imagined. Amos, himself, for all the cheerful face he put on in her presence, spent most of his time out of business hours in inquiry about the missing steamer. At last his anxiety became almost unbearable. One evening, after leaving Aunty Owen, he went to his own little room and made a hasty, careless toilette. On the street again he bent his steps toward what he termed the elegant house. "I must get my mind off this thing," thought Amos. "I will go and call on Miss Garr."

Proceeding down Folsom Street, a long train of mute ratiocination ended audibly thus: "She has said she would be glad to see me;" and hearing music in the

mansion to which he was destined, he continued, "In there I shall surely find, at least, temporary relief for these weary thoughts."

A servant answered the ring of Amos at the door of the "elegant house."

"Is Miss Garr in?"

"Miss Garr, I believe, is here this evening."

"I wish to see her."

Noticing a slight hesitation on the part of the servant, Amos gave his name, coupled with a request to be shown into a suitable place of waiting.

With some little trepidation the servant threw open the drawing-room door, and announced: "Mr. Dixon!"

Four faces were immediately turned towards the visitor. The only one of them that Amos remembered ever to have seen before — namely, that of Miss Sophia Garr — mantled with a very deep blush. That lady, however, arose and shook hands with Amos, who stood considerably embarrassed by the manifest sensation his entrance had caused.

"Miss Clayton," said she, "let me introduce to you my friend, Mr. Dixon; Mr. Lang and Mr. Schmerling, Mr. Dixon."

Amos was seated. A lull pervaded the whole company, whose music and laughter, a few moments ago, had reached even the street. Amos observed this, and could not resist the conclusion that he was the cause. He felt, too, just a little piqued at such a reception, after such urgent invitation.

"Well, Miss Garr," he said, but addressing the whole company, "I have taken the earliest opportunity to comply with your earnest and friendly request to call upon you."

Another marked sensation.

"You are very kind, Mr. Dixon," was Miss Garr's uneasy response, "but there is an unfortunate mistake here."

"Mistake! How, Miss Garr?" demanded Amos, his indignation rising at such disingenuousness.

"I do not live here, Mr. Dixon; this is Mrs. Clayton's."

"Why, I certainly accompanied you to this very door last Saturday afternoon."

"Certainly you did, Mr. Dixon. I come here three times a week to give Miss Clayton private lessons in French, and I happen to be here," continued Miss Sophia Garr, with some flourish, "I happen to be here, to-night, at the invitation of my pupil, whose mother and I were old friends in the State of Maine."

"Very well, Miss Garr" —

"I beg your forgiveness, Mr. Dixon. I will explain to you privately how I happened to forget to give you my present address."

"Ladies and gentlemen, I — I — I beg your pardon," stammered Amos, as he arose to go.

"No, no," said Miss Clayton, approaching Amos with a grace, dignified and very lovely withal, "no, Mr. Dixon. Miss Garr was here when Mr. Lang came to herald the arrival of his old friend and fellow student. She was then invited to be present at the musical treat we are having this evening; and Mr. Dixon, as her friend, will also do me the favor to share it with us."

"Really, I think I'd better not, really."

"I insist," broke in Miss Garr; "or, that is, I almost insist on your remaining. I am so anxious to explain away this sad, sad mistake."

“ You would not, Mr. Dixon,” added Miss Clayton, “ put such a slight upon the musical abilities of Mr. Schmerling, as to leave before you have heard him.”

There was a music in the voice, which said this, that had more to do in persuading the confused Amos to remain, than anything he expected from the elegant languor of Schmerling, whom he now regarded for the first time. It would not be a pretty use of language to say that Amos was charmed by this young lady, as smaller animals are said to be charmed by very hateful-looking reptiles; nor would it be true. Because it was the kindly tones of Miss Clayton's voice, alone, that set the foolish fellow to thinking of the bird song he had heard on the lawn, that Saturday afternoon; and that — but there is no use of trying to explain it; he would have done almost anything that voice had told him to do. And before we blame him, we must consider that he had not been out in company very much, and did not know before, that there were such voices in the world.

Miss Clayton looked exceedingly pleased, when Amos was again seated. She had been impressed with a natural honesty about him. She knew he would have gone away sadly mortified and grieved at the innocent *faux pas* the schoolmistress had led him into; and she had determined that he should go away, feeling just the contrary. In a word, Amos Dixon had excited the pity of Amelia Clayton.

The sallow face of Miss Sophia Garr now wore a dubious expression. She was debating with herself whether, after this, she would not have to give up the “ rising young man,” and commence “ prospecting ” in some other direction. Her face grew calmer, as she thought of the line of defense she would make before

Amos — and did make that very evening. The fact is, Miss Garr had for some time nursed a scheme by which she expected to be invited to make the elegant house her permanent home. The illness of Mrs. Clayton, Amelia's mother, had unfortunately interposed a barrier to the speedy fulfillment of Miss Sophia's plans; and Mr. Dixon had called, before Miss Garr had been invited to take possession of the home she coveted. Amelia knew nothing of the domestic blessing thus preparing for her; so, of course, it would be improper to make the explanation to Mr. Dixon in her hearing; and hence the very distressingly embarrassing condition of Miss Garr in the foregoing scene.

It is true that the schoolmistress had no definite idea as yet, how she should secure a lodging in the elegant house. But she hoped she would, and that was enough for her. That was this prim maiden's idiosyncrasy. What she hoped she believed. "Hope," she would say to her old friend from the State of Maine, Mrs. Clayton, "hope is worth twenty-five dollars a month; and my dear Mrs. Clayton, many of us less favored beings have scarcely any other income."

All this time, George Lang had sat upon a sofa in polite silence; his handsome figure posed, so as to display the faultless set of his waistcoat and the graceful hanging of his watch chain, — for Mr. Lang always regarded these little effects in the presence of ladies. His black eyes were rarely so sparkling, being full, then, of repressed merriment; and it was not usual, even, for him so to finger his irreproachable moustache, for he was, of a truth, pulling it with all his force — drawing out pain that he might keep in laughter.

At the turn of affairs, brought about by Amelia's gen-

erous diplomacy, the scene was no longer amusing to Mr. Lang. So he was the first to break the silence: "Now, Karl, give us that 'Moonlight Sonata' of Beethoven, which, you know, is only yourself done into music."

Schmerling was very thankful for this timely suggestion. He had felt anything but merriment at the discomfiture of Amos. Although ignorant of it at the time, Mr. Dixon had, indeed, made a friend in the warm-hearted German. Karl Schmerling, moreover, had that vulgar way, so rare with fashionable young ladies, of going to the piano, when he really knew he was wanted there, without being asked twenty times. Miss Sophia Garr observed this reprehensible conduct on the part of the visitor, and vented her sense of the impropriety, *sotto voce*, in the kind of French which she had learned at the Female Academy in Maine, and now taught to Miss Clayton, at one dollar per hour.

"*C'est bieng cooreoo, ce Allymand!*"

This confidential elegance was lost on the young lady to whom it was addressed. Miss Clayton was already absorbed in the divine harmonies of the great blind Seer. Karl was a musician in his own despite. All instruments were nearly alike to him. It was another way he had of talking. Music was the best expression of his nature.

Indeed, the composition was not new to Amelia Clayton; she herself, in fact, had studied it. But there was something in it to-night, she had never heard before. There *was* something new in it. She could read it now as it really was and is—a transcription of the great Dreamer's soul. The music took complete possession of player and hearers; and the delicious grief of the dead composer lived again.

"Beautiful, beautiful!" exclaimed every voice at once, as Karl finished, turned about on the piano stool, and faced the company.

In the lull which naturally succeeded, Miss Sophia Garr thought she would patronize the musician who had made such an impression. She would condescend to show him that she spoke French.

"*Parley voo Frangsay? Commong se appel ça?*" she asked, all smiles.

Karl had spoken French, as he had English, from childhood; but he failed to detect the language of Fénelon, in the incognito of Miss Garr's pronunciation.

"What, madam?" said he, bending over the better to hear.

"*Commong se appel ça, la moosique?*"

"No, madam, I do not play it."

The lamentable ignorance of Karl had lost him the good impression he had just made on Miss Garr, and she was silent.

Amos now propounded a series of friendly questions to Schmerling; and the two were soon engaged in the usual conversation of old Californians with new-comers; ending generally in certain wise observations in meteorology and climatology, and in the old Californian's learning how the new Californian is pleased with California.

In the mean time, George Lang and Amelia Clayton, seated together on the sofa, are having a little talk of their own, commencing thus upon the part of the last named:—

"How beautifully he plays, how beautifully! I don't think I ever saw a live baron before."

"Whist," said Mr. Lang, with a deprecatory motion

of that particular hand on which he wore his solitaire diamond ring. "He must not know that I have told you he is a baron. He has abandoned his title, and is strangely sensitive on the subject. Why, I would as soon have him know that I told you of his engagement to a young lady of rank in his own country. Well, there!" exclaimed the broker, apparently much confused.

"Then he is engaged?" demanded Amelia.

"It seems to me, Miss Clayton," said Mr. Lang, simulating still greater confusion, "it seems to me as if I could not keep anything from you, so please do not ask me to betray the secret of my friend."

Mr. Lang congratulated himself that he had given out Karl as engaged and not married, since she, whom he was deceiving, might some time have occasion to ask Schmerling about his wife. Her delicacy would now prevent her speaking to him of his affianced. George Lang further congratulated himself that he understood and could manage Miss Clayton so well.

She looked at the piano, then at Karl, and repeated, as if thinking aloud: "How beautifully he plays, how beautifully!"

"And sings, too," added George.

"Do sing something, then, Mr. Schmerling," said Amelia, in a louder voice.

"Yes, Karl, give us your song."

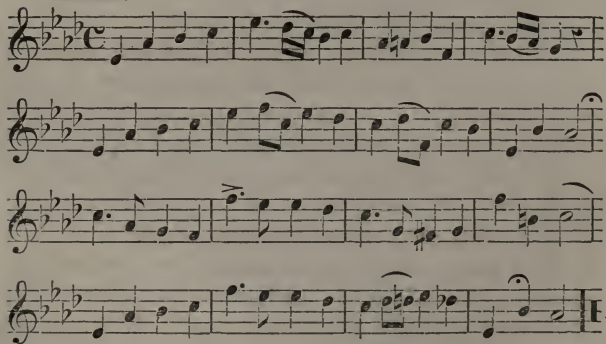
"You mean *your* song, George. You have set the memories of our boyhood into poetry; and I have only fitted your beautiful words to a melody. You are the Benvenuto Cellini, who wrought the master-piece; I merely placed it in the cabinet."

"Well, have it your own way; only poetry is a little

out of my line now." And George Lang did not look at Amelia Clayton, for he knew she was looking at him.

Amos Dixon probably did not notice that the foregoing panegyric had been artfully extorted from the generous nature of Schmerling. He was too busily engaged in stealing glances of admiration at Amelia, even while Miss Garr was spreading her apologies and her mining implements before him. He was thinking how good and lovely Miss Clayton was, and wishing if there are such people in society, that he had gone into society a great deal more than he had; and thinking, in a word, of anything but Mr. Lang and his arts. Still, Mr. Dixon could not help remarking a difference between the manner of the poet and that of the musician; there was something so quiet in the way Mr. Schmerling approached and seated himself at the piano, and commenced playing this melody:—¹

Andante.



¹ This song is also published in sheet-music, with an accompaniment for the piano-forte.

Then, without further prelude, Karl began the following —

SONG OF FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship is the perfect living,
Since it is of two in one:
For we live not, if we love not,
Or we love ourselves alone.

Lightest sunshine leans on shadow,
In its golden alchemy;
And the star-lit sky of even
Shares its jewels with the sea.

So our grief, if we but share it,
With a loving breast and true,
Turns its stony weight of sorrow
To a golden joy for two.

Life is double; dust and spirit;
Ever two, forever one:
Walking in the slanting sunlight;
Casting shades beyond the sun.

Doubled is the joy divided:
Friendship is the arch complete —
Is the rainbow arch and prism,
Where the rays of gladness meet;

Meet and scatter, many-colored,
O'er the darkness of our way,
Light and beauty and the promise
Of to-morrow to to-day.

Of course, many compliments followed, as there always should, after any performance in a polite drawing-room.

“And you wrote this song, Mr. Lang?” asked Amelia.

“Yes,” answered he, in evident satisfaction at the impression made, and his eyes, meeting those of Miss Clayton, fell. “Yes,” he said, “I have the honor.”

"It has a pretty vein of poetry," observed the metallic and discriminating Miss Garr.

"Pretty vain of poetry," echoed Amos Dixon, who really thought he must say something; the word "vein," being spelled above, as it sounded to one or two of the company at that moment. The fact is, the voice of Amelia and the memory of the bird song, which he had heard on the lawn, had become so confused in his mind, that Mr. Dixon had been listening only to her part of the conversation.

"But really," said Miss Clayton, instantly distracting attention from Amos, "how shall I sufficiently praise your composition, Mr. Schmerling?"

"By praising the words," replied Karl. "Such verses set themselves to music. In this instance, it was merely carrying out the spirit of the song. The music is only the necessary double of the words. If I had succeeded, the result would have been a perfect friendship between trochees and quavers."

"Yet, Mr. Schmerling," Amelia rejoined, "I should have attributed the words to you, rather than to Mr. Lang, if I had not been told to the contrary."

"Indeed!" thought Lang, slightly changing his position on the sofa, "I brought this fellow here to show me off, not to take all the honors!"

"Why, Miss Clayton?" asked Karl.

"There is something so Germanesque about the words."

"Germanesque!" repeated Karl. "I suppose I might take it as a compliment to my nation, if I did not think it an injustice to your own. Americanesque, you should rather call it. They are not all wooden nutmegs that grow about your country's Castalia. Witness your Bryant

and Hawthorne. I have heard people call them Germanesque, because, forsooth, they do not write like Englishmen or Frenchmen. No; they are the true types of American genius. They have thrown some of the purple haze of your magnificent autumns about your language. What you call Germanesque, then, is nothing but the glorious spirit of your Indian summers."

Karl had no sooner finished than the company were startled by a quick, vigorous ringing at the door bell.

In a few moments after, an agitated voice was heard demanding of the servant: —

"Is Mr. George Lang here?"

"Yes," said the servant.

"Where? In here?" and the stranger — a crisp, weazen-faced little man, with a cast in one of his restless eyes — rushed unannounced into the parlor.

George Lang had arisen at the mention of his own name by a familiar voice, and now demanded, "What's the matter?"

"Here, read that!" said the little man, whom the acute reader has already recognized as Mr. Nelson Shallop.

Lang endeavored to repress his own feelings, as he read the paper in his hand. Looking up at last, he said, as composedly as he could, "Why, there was no use of getting so excited. Miss Clayton, I beg pardon for the way in which this gentleman has ushered himself into your drawing-room."

"Nothing to get excited about!" exclaimed Mr. Shallop, forgetting himself in his emotion. "Why, you are worth at least twenty-five thousand dollars more to-night, than you were this morning!"

“What of that, sir?” and the look which the broker gave his clerk was not pleasant to behold. “Karl,” said Lang, turning to Schmerling with a smile, “Karl, it is only another dispatch from the manager of the ‘Dorcas’ mine; and, ladies,” added Mr. Lang, continuing his smile for the benefit of Miss Clayton and Miss Garr, but looking chiefly toward the latter, “and, ladies, will you ever excuse this unfortunate intrusion of my business, here, of all places? I am sorry, however, that it claims my immediate attention. Besides, we are all anxious about the missing steamer.”

Notwithstanding this speech, there was something like admired disorder in the breaking up of the company. George Lang did not wait for the congratulations of Schmerling, but followed Shallop hurriedly into the hall. There the broker and his clerk began an excited conversation in an undertone, which they continued as they reached the street. Amos and Karl were thus thrown together, and were the last to take their leave of the ladies and of the elegant house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STEAMER.

Messrs. Lang and Shallop were nearly a block in advance, as Karl and Amos passed down the gravel walk of the lawn. At the gate these latter gentlemen met a man who touched his hat respectfully, and said: "The shteamer has come at last, surs; I'm jist going to till my young missus."

"The steamer come! Where did you hear that?" asked Amos, with an eagerness which can be imagined.

"I heard it, surs, at the grocery hard by on the corner beyont. Every one bes talking of the shteamer, surs," and with another salute, John, the Irish coachman to the Claytons, rushed through the gate and up the lawn.

Amos and Karl now hastened on after Lang and Shallop. Could these latter have heard the news? Schmerling thought they had, or why were they walking so fast? for Amos and Karl gained on them but slowly.

From the excited groups on the corners, nothing certain could be learned; not even that the steamer had been heard from. They seemed to be assembled to ask questions of themselves and of every passer-by. Amos was resolved, therefore, to learn authoritatively from headquarters, that her boy was safe, before he communicated the glad tidings to Auntie Owen. So the two young gentlemen pressed on, catching sight of the broker and his clerk, to lose them again in the crowds upon the street.

"The steamer, the steamer!" they heard on every hand, as they passed.

The scene in front of the great hotels was noisiest. On the bulletin board in the reading-room of the Occidental, was this brief announcement: "A large steamer, supposed to be of the Regular line, is coming in through the Heads." Was it the ship that had been missing or the next one of the line, now overdue? This was the theme of much excited dispute. Some were condemning the Company for keeping back the news; others contended that the steamer had been safe all the time, and that the whole thing was a "bearing" stock operation, etc., etc. Amos heard these things and shuddered, as he hurried on. The enormity hinted at, of thus trafficking with the fears and most sacred feelings of poor human nature, set him to thinking more than ever, of the pain-stricken face of Aunty Owen, as he had last seen it, peering after him from the door of the little brown house.

As Dixon and Schmerling passed along Montgomery Street, they could see and hear in the distance the moving throng about the "Alta" newspaper office, clamoring for news — a black mass swaying to and fro in the darkness, with now and then a face or form brought into jagged relief by the gas-light streaming from the windows.

The pace of Lang and Shallop was necessarily slackened in the increasing crowd, now all making in one direction — toward the steamship office. Of a sudden, there stood before the two gentlemen just named, an old woman, seemingly distracted by the multitude of people, wringing her hands and saying, —

"O sirs! is my boy Henry come? Is Henry coming?"

"Madam, we have no time to talk to you now," said Lang, pushing hurriedly past her.

The poor creature turned her eyes, in earnest entreaty, toward Nelson Shallop.

"Here, old woman, take that," observed the brisk little man of business, thrusting her a very small coin, "take that, and move on — move on, I say."

She stood riveted to the spot, stupefied, as Lang and Shallop disappeared; and the eager, anxious crowd, eddying and surging around her, passed on.

"Why will not some one," she said, when speech returned to her, "why will not some one tell me of my poor boy? O good sirs!" —

"Why, Aunty Owen!"

It was Amos and Karl. "Why, Aunty Owen!" exclaimed Amos again, "what are you doing here, alone, at this hour of the night?"

"Is Henry come?" was her only answer to all his questions.

"I believe so, Aunty Owen. A steamer is telegraphed."

Karl saw the joyous expression on the old mother's face, and well nigh broke down as he said, "Yes, my good madam, we are just going to get news of your son, at the steamship office. Mr. Dixon has been telling me all about him and you. You shall come along with us; and then, after you are satisfied that your Henry is safe, why, one of us will see you back home again."

"God bless you, sirs; you and Mr. Dixon are so different from the others; and, sirs, and Henry is coming!"

"Yes," said Amos, "now let us go to meet him;" and he walked by the side of Aunty Owen, Karl going on a little ahead.

As they neared their destination, the throng became denser and noisier; and Schmerling was lost from the

couple he was leading. Every one seemed bent on getting through the door of the office. The bulletin board was hidden in the darkness and the jam about it. Leading Aunty Owen a little apart, Amos left her, and rushed back, crowding with his strong shoulders through the densest of the throng toward the door.

Arriving finally at the threshold, he came in contact with a man as strong as he, pushing himself from the office to the street. Amos, looking up into the bloodless face before him, recognized it as that of the agent, whom he had questioned so often about the missing steamer.

"When did it come?" asked Amos, breathless.

"Just now."

Amos breathed easier. "Thank God," said he, as he paused in his struggle with the crowd, "thank God for that!"

"For what?" asked the agent indignantly.

"That the steamer has come at last."

"The steamer, sir? *That* steamer is lost!"

CHAPTER V.

MISS SOPHIA GARR DEVELOPS INTO AN ANGEL.

THE yard in front of the elegant house on Folsom Street was bathed in the early sun. And that was the second bath it had had this morning, for the gardener's hose — that artificial thunder-cloud of California summers — had already shed its rain. So, now, at the bottom of the stream of sunlight, that passed over the whole lawn, diamond drops sparkled from their hiding-places in the emerald grass, and in the flower-beds of ruby and amethyst. Only the shadows of the acacias and cypresses stood out, wading slowly, as the noon approached, deeper and deeper into the flood of sunshine.

The residence of Mrs. Clayton was such a mosaic of architectural ornamentation as is found oftener in American cities than elsewhere. There was nothing bizarre about it; yet to build such a house it requires a republicanism — not puritanism, understand — of art. In the matter of ornamentation, it is to be feared, the Ionic, Doric, Byzantine, and Gothic, in castles, cathedrals, villas, and cottages, are sometimes made "free and equal;" and those deemed most fit are elected to a place in the building; which then becomes, in a small way, and with a sort of property qualification of questionable taste, the House of Representatives of all architectures. The residence of Mrs. Clayton, however, partook only in a modest degree of these fancies in stone. Any one could see that it had

cost much money ; and, as it rose out of its beautiful grounds, with this air of wealth and luxury about it, we cannot, on the whole, quarrel with Mr. Dixon irreconcilably for calling it an "elegant house."

It had been built by the late Mr. Clayton very much as he had made his will ; both as nearly to suit himself as he could get an architect or a lawyer to do for him ; for the late Mr. Clayton had left behind him, besides an irreproachable memory, a handsome city property for his widow and Amelia, their only child.

About the window-sills of the front parlor, on the outside, there ran slight balustrades ; and with these the two capacious windows, thrown open to the floor, formed something like two balconies. Mrs. Clayton had determined not to be sick in such pleasant weather, and, especially, when such exciting news was afloat in the city. She had, accordingly, taken her place at one of these balconies. Beside her sat Miss Sophia Garr, who had not gone home last night for two reasons : first, Mr. Dixon, in the excitement of departure, had forgotten to solicit the privilege of accompanying her ; and, second, it was her duty and interest to see as much as possible of Mrs. Clayton, her "old friend from the State of Maine."

At the other balcony sat Miss Amelia Clayton. She had just finished reading aloud for her mother's benefit, the newspaper account of the wrecked steamer. They were deeply moved, as who was not in the great city ? Even Miss Garr spoke of the terrible disaster in an undertone. Very worldly people sometimes have a great respect for death, and — change the subject as soon as they can, as Miss Garr did.

Amelia now sat reading again to herself the para-

graph in the account, which had made the deepest impression upon her mind. It was this : —

“ As the last boat was leaving the wreck, the Second Officer, who commanded it, requested a young man, one of the crew, to get aboard. ‘No,’ was the prompt answer, ‘there isn’t room for me and this helpless old man, too. Take him, and I will stand my chances till you return.’ So saying, he assisted a tottering old man over the bulwarks, and stood cheering the departing boat — the last of the wreck. The over-laden boat never got to the land, or back to the sinking ship. No one who pushed off in it now lives to tell how it was swallowed up by the sea, except the brave Second Officer, to whom we are indebted for many of the foregoing particulars. In ten minutes after the small boat left her, the steamer went down. Nothing since has been heard of the gallant young man. He was the freight-clerk of the ill-fated vessel, and his name, we learn, was Henry Owen.”

Amelia laid the paper aside, but did not succeed in banishing the painful subject from her mind so well as her mother and Miss Garr had done already ; for the old friends from the State of Maine had been some time engaged in a low confidential talk to themselves. Amelia might have been pained by the facility and alacrity with which these ladies transferred their attention from the dead and bereaved, to the living and prosperous. At any rate, her thoughts were seemingly following her dark gray eyes from sunshine into shadow — that is, from the lawn into the faces of her mother and Miss Sophia Garr. She heard enough to know that she was in some way connected with this confidential talk, and she could not see why Miss Garr should be taken into her mother’s confidence, to the exclusion of herself.

It is just this expression of uneasiness that best aids

you in reading Miss Amelia Clayton. Her nature is a placid ocean ; and it is this ground-swell that gives an idea of the depths and of the hidden pearls.

Not every one is thrilled by the "Transfiguration," in the Vatican ; so the face of Amelia Clayton is not beautiful to all. The beholder must have a soul on which the beauty can be projected, else no image will be mirrored. Hers is such a face, for instance, as, seen by a dejected poet in a strange city, would make him glad for a whole day. She is none of your romance beauties. You have seen such faces — faces that, howsoever your sky is overcast, look out at you through the clouds, like Raphael's angels.

Amelia is taller than her mother, and would be more graceful were their ages reversed. Old Californians are rarely pale as other people are pale. No slight illness can wear away the evidences of the round years of almost constant wind and sunshine. Health may recede from the face, as the sea from its old places, but the tan of California remains, like the amber on the shores of Courland. The complexion of Mrs. Clayton was not an exception. The ancients imagined amber had a spirit. The face of Mrs. Clayton certainly had one ; and it did not seem angry, when Miss Garr, in her low, confidential talk, already alluded to, recounted the occurrences of the night before ; nor even at certain wise suggestions on the part of that prudent spinster.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars, as you say, Sophia, is not a bad day's earnings."

Mrs. Clayton did not use the familiar "Sophia," in exactly the same spirit as she did, when they were equals in the State of Maine. There was a certain patronage in it now which was pleasurable to Mrs. Clayton, and

which, to her mental self, she termed magnanimity. The two ladies were not alike, but congenial ; and their congeniality rested upon a base that is common to many friendships in this world : they saw wrong alike from different stand-points.

"Twenty-five thousand dollars, yes !" exclaimed Miss Garr ; "and it is perfectly wonderful what fortunes are made in this new business of mining stocks."

The reader, of course, is wiser than Miss Garr, for his opportunities of gaining information have been better. He knows well enough that George Lang never made that money out of the "Dorcas" mine at all, but in a lucky speculation over the loss of a great steamship and cargo, valued at a million of dollars, and of lives valued at — but they hadn't much to do with the appreciation of the stock in the "Opposition" line ; so, really, Mr. Lang had thought very little about them.

"And you invited Mr. Lang to come again soon, Amelia ?" asked Mrs. Clayton, in a louder voice.

"Yes, mother, I wanted you to hear his old friend, Mr. Schmerling, sing that song."

"Well, you need not have been so particular about that Mr. Schmerling's coming."

"Why, mother, he sings and plays so beautifully !"

"Nevertheless, I am credibly informed" — her authority could have been no one but Miss Garr — "that he is nothing but an idle Dutchman ; and I hardly think it is just the thing for him to be seen often visiting in a family of our breeding."

Amelia thought of the secret she was to keep, that Schmerling was really a live baron, and remarked coolly : —

"It seems to me just as proper for Mr. Schmerling to come here, as it is for Mr. Lang."

An expressive "Oh!" from the mother; an expressive ditto from the Maine friend — not audibly, indeed, but in an articulate shrug from her convulsive shoulders. This hitting from the shoulder at the mind, was, by the way, the most successful of Miss Garr's French accomplishments.

"Amelia," began Mrs. Clayton, with suppressed ill-feeling, "you know what some girls would give to have the attentions from Mr. Lang that you have. He is considered irresistible by every one."

"I know that he is generally considered so; but as for that" — and Amelia was too busy arranging the folds of her morning-gown to finish the sentence.

"Now, look here, Amelia, don't you know that George Lang wants to marry you?"

"I do not, mother," replied the young lady, shocked at the directness of the question.

"Don't you know that he loves you?"

"I could not be a woman and not know, and I would not be a true woman if I did not respect any one that truly loves me." Seeing, from her mother's face, that this did not satisfy her, Amelia continued, "But what right have I to use a secret which has not been confided to me?"

"Then he loves you?"

"Mother, if this were ever a proper question, now does not seem the occasion to ask it. Mr. Lang is very good-looking and very attractive, but — but he never looks me in the eye."

"Humph! I suppose your Dutchman *does*."

"It appears to me, mother, that Mr. Schmerling could look any one in the eye."

"Hear her, hear her!" exclaimed Mrs. Clayton. "It

is you who keep me sick. You will never see anything as I do. I vow to gracious, you will some day be running off with some Dutch musician. I have always said so."

In point of fact, this was the first time Mrs. Clayton had ever said or thought anything of the kind; but this was not the first time she had got into a furious passion about nothing.

Amelia arose quietly from her chair and approached that of Mrs. Clayton. "Mother, you know that I have never crossed you in anything — that I thought was right. You are already sorry for what you have said; and that you may have no longer an object for your causeless anger, permit me to retire. God grant that, whenever it shall be my time to marry, my choice shall be your choice."

Stooping, she kissed her mother. Then, shaking Miss Garr's hand, Amelia left the room.

A calm succeeded.

— During which, it occurred to Miss Sophia that it was time for her to be going to her school. "Oh, how wearisome," sighed Miss Garr, "to have to leave you thus, my kind, generous friend, when you are not at all well, and, may be, I could, in my humble way" —

"Wouldn't you like to have a rest from school-teaching, Sophia?" broke in Mrs. Clayton, not a little moved by the insinuating speech she had syncopated.

"Oh! so much," answered the priestess of Minerva, who had a wonderful faculty at divining, when her way was lit up by her own hopes.

"I have been thinking," continued Mrs. Clayton, "that I should like to have you live with us. You could be a

sort of companion to me, and tutoress of Amelia. What do you think of it?"

"I should be delighted!" exclaimed Miss Garr, in a tapering treble. "I have been confined in the school-room so long that I really need rest."

"And Amelia would be delighted, too," said the mother, for she knew that she could put the matter in the light of a generous action to an old friend, and convince her daughter directly.

"We will say nothing about salary?" suggested Miss Garr.

"No, no," said Mrs. Clayton, in a burst of what she considered magnanimity, "no, no; we will live together, as the old friends that we are."

Miss Garr saw that she had been misunderstood. She could really have lived on her interest money. "But, then," she faltered, "board and lodging are not everything; one must dress."

"Well, say we add thirty dollars a month for that object."

"Oh! I would not be worth it. That's as much as a servant gets."

"Make it fifty dollars, then," said Mrs. Clayton, more anxious than she seemed.

"As you like," sighed Miss Garr, resignedly.

"Enough said," continued the magnanimous widow. "From this very day, this is your home. The sooner you hand in your resignation to the Board the better."

This was good fortune enough. It might have been better, if it had happened before Mr. Dixon's call; but what matter after all? It had come at last. The waxen wings of Sophia's hope, as you shall see, were impelling her directly in the face of the sun. "I will move here

to-morrow," she said, "but I would not like to resign before the end of the term."

"On account of the 'Teachers' Contract,' I suppose?"

"No; but when a lady teacher resigns in the middle of a term, a marriage is soon expected, and you know," continued Miss Garr, confidentially, "that would be so embarrassing to Mr. Dixon."

"The gentleman who was here last night?"

"The same."

It undoubtedly would have been embarrassing, considering Mr. Dixon's slight acquaintance with Miss Garr.

"Resign, then, at the end of the term; but, come now, when is it really to come off, Sophia — the marriage?"

Sophia strove desperately after a blush, but said nothing.

"Well, well, it's always the way with you girls. Never mind, never mind."

This generous flattery to the girl of thirty summers was only to put her into good humor for something that was to follow: "Don't you think, Sophia, that by living in the same family with your *one* pupil, you might have a great deal of influence over her mind?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Clayton."

"Especially in preparing her for the important step you are about to take yourself?"

"I don't think I understand!"

"Could you not prepare a pupil for marriage with a proper young man?"

"I think I begin to see your meaning, Mrs. Clayton."

Miss Sophia Garr was only sorry that she had not seen her old friend's meaning much sooner than she did. She considered herself fairly outwitted, in the point of salary.

“ You know, Sophia, I am so passionate, and you are so cool. Amelia always conquers me. Will you help me — to — to ” —

“ Yes, Mrs. Clayton, I will help you to add George Lang’s fortune to yours.”

“ Sophia, you are an angel ! ”

—— And the angel, extricating herself from the hysteric embraces of the fond widow, flew away to her sublunary duties in the Public School.

CHAPTER VI.

UN BALLO IN MASCHERA.

YOU may have been at the superb entertainments of the "Marquesa," at Florence, when her husband was *Governatore* of Tuscany; you may have assisted at the wild displays of the Orpheum of Berlin; or at the sublime Punch and Judy exhibitions of the Princess Demidoff, in Paris, — and yet, with these as phenomena, you may be unable to come at a fair inductive idea of a masque ball in San Francisco.

In the metropolis of the "Evening Land," there is a peculiarity in this branch of devotion to the merry goddess. The occasion seems a sort of spiritual onomatopœia, wherein (conversely) the sense is echo to the sound. The maskers are animated by what may be termed an *esprit de corps*. An army of merry-making Cincinnati they seem, having left their avocational ploughs behind them, to tilt with dull care and put sorrow to ignominious flight.

The subscription masque ball of the "Magnolia Club" was the very Alpine peak of gayety, commanding a glorious sunrise of anticipations, and a sunset of pleasant memories — in short, a Righi, which the pleasure-pilgrim had long looked forward to, and was destined to look back upon, with delight.

Huge poll-parrots and pensive Ophelias, beer-barrels

and bishops, harlequins and Platos, monks and devils tessellated the floors in lancers and polkas.

In the pauses of the dance, love was stricken from the clash of all tongues. Love was made in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Chinese. Love was made by kings to shepherdesses, and by shepherds to queens. Love was made by major-generals to vivandières; and by drunken Paddies to meek-eyed sultanas.

Yet, running through the Babel of words and gestures, was that one thread of hearty abandon, which lifted this out of the routine of carnival scenes elsewhere; and which now holds it in suspense, above any description. There were no stage-waits, or scene-shiftings between the whirl of the dance and the ardor of sweet talk. Waltzes drifted into love-making, and love-making drifted into quadrilles. The music of the redowa did not seem to die away, but to melt, rather, into the low tones of the love-makers; and the fluttering hearts, instead of the merry feet, kept time. To the lights, which gleamed above the decorations, and to the birds that sang from the cages on the walls, almost hidden in the garlands, there was something congenial in the bright eyes and echoing laughter of the dancers beneath. Every heart, in fine, appeared set to the occasion, as words to the melody of a Scottish song.

Not in this jovial company would you have found Amos Dixon. Handsomely attired in his usual creases and wrinkles, he had taken his seat above, in the gallery of the hall. Amos was disguised as a spectator; and was probably the most successful masker of the evening; for he did not look at the giddy scene below at all. His eyes were engaged in swallow-flights clear above and across it to the other side of the gallery. Here they hovered about a group —

But what was Amos Dixon doing at such a place?

Several weeks have passed since his last appearance before you, and they have been sad ones to him.

At the steamship office, that evening, as soon as he had slightly recovered from the painful shock the agent's sudden announcement had given him, Amos turned back to the place where he had left Aunt Owen. But she was not there. He sought her in every direction, but he had lost her in the crowd.

On his dreary way homeward he called at the little brown house, and she was not there. At an early hour next morning, he passed her little gate many times, loath to disturb her, if she might be sleeping after so much weariness and sorrow. His anxiety at last becoming unbearable, he knocked at her door.

And there came no answer.

Amos knocked again and again, and still there came no answer.

Forcing the door open, he found that Aunt Owen was not there. The silent rooms were as she had left them the night before.

It is a story too long and weary to be dwelt upon, how day after day, and night after night, Amos knocked again and again at the door of the little brown house, and sought Aunt Owen in every part of the city, — until, one morning, the landlord placed a placard in the window, announcing that the little brown house was "To Let."

You may have noticed, if you have ever passed through a native wood, that where the trees are thickest, the soil is most nourished by their fallen fellows. It is thrown out, therefore, simply as a query, whether our natural hearts are not, in some respects, like forests primeval —

whether some affections do not spring, as it were, from the dead trunks of others. It is certain, at any rate, that, as the weeks wore drearily away to Amos, the image of a calm young face was mirrored by the side of the kindly old one, on the receding waters of his remembrance.

When he read in the paper that a subscription masquerade ball was to be given by the "Magnolia Club," he took pains to find out whether Amelia Clayton would be there. And this is why Amos Dixon is sitting where you have left him above in the gallery, peering across at that group on the other side of the hall — a group of four persons, the centre of which is no other than the pleased face of Miss Amelia Clayton.

On one side of her sat George Lang, and on the other, Miss Sophia Garr and Karl Schmerling. This kind-hearted German, learning (from her own lips) that Miss Garr was now one of the family, and hearing George, in her presence, invite Amelia to witness the ball, had extended a like invitation to the retiring schoolmistress. And here they all were — not masked, of course — intensely enjoying the gayety of the spectacle below, wholly unconscious of the eager espionage of which they were the subjects.

Mr. Amos Dixon was not a philosopher. Had you asked him why that group of four was of more interest to him than were the grotesque hundreds beneath, he could hardly have told you — that is, without blushing and stammering. In general, he had a way of doing what he did not think was wrong, without any psychological hair-splitting about motives. No, Amos was not a philosopher. He could not convince himself that wrong was right. Yet, somehow or other, there was a loadstone

property in the Right, that almost always acted, through the external wrinkles and creases, on the hidden steel of his nature.

At twelve o'clock the bell sounded for the unmasking, and the visitors descended to the floor of the hall. It was then that the quick eye of Miss Sophia Garr first observed Amos. She thought it would be a master stroke to make him jealous and pay him up for neglecting her so long. So, she leaned more affectionately upon the arm of Karl Schmerling, and led Amelia and George up to the innocent ledge of humanity, she was "prospecting."

The two gentlemen greeted Amos; one warmly, the other politely. Miss Garr bowed stiffly, and clave still more affectionately to Karl — a clear case, wherein the tendril might have sustained the oak. Amelia extended her hand kindly, and Amos imagined that he was touching velvet — only it thrilled him so much more. Something seemed to have dropped into his heart; for a crimson ripple ran clear up to the roots of his hair and was lost.

Miss Garr saw it, and attributed it, of course, to jealousy. She thought it would now be politic to let a little hope in upon her victim. Drawing him aside, she confided to him that she is now — as she had always expected to be, and regretted that she was not, on the occasion of his call, etc., etc. — one of the family of her old friend from the State of Maine. "At our house," said she, with an impressive curvilinear glance, "Mr. Dixon will always be welcome, unless" — and now Miss Garr was simply killing in her manner — "unless you stay away again as long as you have this time."

In the same house! "Thank you, thank you!" — and the gleam of real pleasure on the face of Amos was dwelt upon by Miss Garr, as a pyrotechnic display in honor of her own triumphal march.

But to make the long-sought ingot more surely hers, she was prepared for further condescension: "This is the last term of my school-teaching; I am a little proud of my class. You must promise to visit it. I shall expect you next Monday. Now, no thanks, pray."

Thus the imperial dispenser of largesses, to Amos Dixon, martyr — as she went back to assume her former *rôle* of tendril (in late autumn), clambering about the slender oak of Karl Schmerling. The two couples now promenaded about the hall, and Amos was left by himself.

For a while he had that indescribable sensation of being alone in crowds. He wandered to a seat, where, unobserved, he could watch Amelia pass. It is a source of some regret that Amos was not a philosopher. He might have made a better analysis of his feelings. As it was, there seemed to be an elastic cord, fastened, at one end, somewhere under his waistcoat, and at the other, to the object he was watching so intently. As the distance between them increased, the tension of the imaginary cord became more and more painful. But when she came around nearer and nearer again, the tension gradually decreased; and he felt the negative pleasure of a diminishing pain.

The sharp eye of Sophia Garr finally discovered his hiding-place. He arose and crossed the hall, unresolved what to do. Here a very unprepossessing young lady in white gauze remarked, from her position as "wall-flower," "Good evening, Mr. Dixon."

Now Amos did not recollect ever to have seen this young lady before. It is, indeed, a question in his mind, to this day, where, and how, and when he was ever introduced to her. And here, as well as anywhere, may be brought forward the remark, that the present chronicler is not responsible for the constitution of Californian society. He has endeavored to paint it as it is, not as it should be. The general reader is not aware, probably, that the Californian always speaks of the Atlantic States as "home," no matter if his children have been born in the New Land, and he himself never intends to leave it. The Pacific coast has been a place of sojourn, a camping-ground, for people who came to get wealth, and fold up their tents again, and steal away with it whence they came. To those who live there, it is a very trite remark, indeed, that, until of late years, there were no homes in California. In such a state of affairs, society must have been very much like a neglected garden; and, if some of the weeds yet remain, it is not at all astonishing. There are, of course, a few select circles into which it would be no novelty to introduce you. It may be owing to the minority of women and a lack of their refining influences, or it may be owing to the free, generous souls of the men — whatever the cause, there is, unquestionably, something peculiarly *expers.curæ*, in the usages of Californian society.

"Good evening, Mr. Dixon," said the very unprepossessing young lady, in white gauze, whom Amos could not remember ever to have seen before.

"Good evening," responded Mr. Dixon, glad to see his way out of the embarrassment in which he found himself, in so large a company, with nothing ostensibly to do; and he proposed a promenade. Thereupon the young

lady in white gauze believed that Mr. Dixon was unacquainted with her mother, and immediately proceeded to introduce him to an older and still more unprepossessing lady, also in white gauze. Amos, of course, had to invite the mother to share in the promenade. And away the three went in just an opposite direction to the others, so as to meet Amelia at every completed round of the hall.

Amos and the mural camellias at his side, made some little sensation among his friends. Miss Sophia Garr was especially impressed. In her eagerness to find out who *her* rivals were, she contemplated having them seated by her at the supper-table. She waited till they came around again : —

“Keep right behind us, Mr. Dixon,” said the angelic Sophia, “they are now forming for supper.”

This innocent little remark elected Amos for two suppers besides his own — that is, fifteen dollars in all. The speaker knew it would ; but what of that ? Wouldn't she thus gratify her curiosity — and her pique, too ?

About this time appeared two tow-headed boys, aged, respectively, eight and ten years. Cried the younger : —

“O ma, are you going to dinner ?”

“Yes, my sons,” said the mother, answering the hungry look of the elder boy, at the same time ; “Yes, my sons, we are going to supper. These are my sons, James and Johnny, Mr. Dixon.”

And the two joined the procession supperward, one taking the mother's hand, and the other clinging to that of his sister — five abreast, Amos in the middle.

It so happened that Miss Garr, very much against her scheme, got drifted to another part of the room, away from the table of Mr. Dixon and his family of unknowns ;

while only the mother and a tow-headed boy separated that gentleman from Amelia Clayton.

"Well, ladies," said Amos, surveying his position and losing his appetite, in the same instant, "how are you pleased with the ball."

"Oh! I don't like it at all," responded the mother, who evidently had not been troubled with partners during the evening.

"No," added the daughter, with an aristocratic shrug. "It's nawthin' to the ball maskeys we used to have in Meadville, Pennsylvany!"

"No, indeed, it isn't," quoth the matron. "Were you ever in Meadville, Mr. Dixon?"

"Never," sighed Amos.

The face of the compassionate mother assumed such an expression, as plainly told the unfortunate young man that his life had been thrown away: "Why, really, Mr. Dixon" —

"Oh, ho! Johnny, you haint got no chicken!" exclaimed the elder tow-head, at the top of his voice, while he flourished a "side bone" at his brother, four seats removed.

"Dod-rot you, Jim, gim' me some of that 'ere chicken!"

Meadville was forgotten, in parental solicitude to quiet the clamorous tow-heads.

Amos now had leisure to observe the sensation his family had made, on both sides of the table, for some distance. He only saw that Amelia did not laugh with the rest.

In the succeeding quiet, Amos sat contemplating about

a yard of gauze, thrown over the daughter's head; then, recollecting that the conversation lagged, he broke silence thus: —

“Miss — uh, what is your character — I mean, what do you represent this evening?”

“A snow-storm.”

“Indeed! and yours, Mrs. — uh?”

“A snow-storm, too!”

Amos now directed his attention to Jimmy and Johnny who were still executing the supper, with the skill of vigorous artists. Pointing sagaciously from one towel-head to the other, he remarked: “Hail-storms, I presume?”

“No, my sons did not come in character.”

“But they show yours!” said the low voice of a spiteful young lady opposite, who, through their ambidexterity, had secured no chicken.

About this time, a man came around to collect the money for the suppers. Approaching Amos: “How many, sir?”

“Let me see,” observed Mr. Dixon, “one, two, three, four, five: five, sir!”

“Twenty-five dollars!” said the man; and Amos paid for the repast of which he had not eaten a morsel.

Meantime, Miss Sophia Garr had been exceedingly uneasy. She had heard the laughter at the table of Amos and reasoned to herself thus: “Can either of those horrid, *designing* creatures be intellectual? I vow I am sorry I asked that stupid Dixon to come to my school. It was good for him that I did not know what I do now. Well, I will call him here and pump him.”

She caught the eye of Amos, just as he was looking

around for comfort, after divesting himself of the aforesaid twenty-five dollars. From the earnestness of her gesticulations, he thought the case so urgent as to warrant him in excusing himself from his company for a short time. Besides, was not the same abandon observable at the supper-table, as in the ball-room? Were not others leaving their seats constantly? The minute after, therefore, Mr. Gloverson's cashier was at the side of Sophia Garr.

"I am sorry, Mr. Dixon, that I have as yet had no opportunity to beg for an introduction to your family—I mean your lady friends." This speech was punctuated with hysteric jerks and bland smiles.

Amos, slightly puzzled, was on the point of addressing some remark to Karl Schmerling, before he returned to his seat—"What did you say their names were, Mr. Dixon?" broke in the anxious Sophia.

"I don't really know their names, Miss Garr."

The current of that lady's being suddenly became a Niagara of green jealousy. "Uh! the deceitful rascal," thought she, "and these designing scare-crows—they have led him on to this, so that I may not, by knowing their names, expose their real characters."

"You mean, Mr. Dixon," she remarked aloud, "you do not want to give their names."

"Upon my honor, Miss Garr, I never remember to have seen either the ladies or the boys before—and I cannot say that—with the exception, perhaps, of the boys—I shall ever care to see them again."

The current of Sophia Garr's being had reached a placid Ontario of tenderness; from which only murmurs of sweet talk reached the ears of Amos, till he returned to his own table.

Now as Mr. Dixon had risen, his seat, in the midst of the family, had been taken by a gentleman in military uniform, "with his suspenders," as the younger tow-head quaintly termed his shoulder-straps, "on the outside of his coat." His moustache bending gently to his smile, he remarked, as he helped himself vigorously to the viands : —

"Ah ! you came down with Mr. Dinkson, I believe ?"

"Yes, but we have been expecting you."

"And while we was waitin'," exclaimed little Johnny, from behind an embankment of sponge-cake, "a man come 'long, an' Mr. Dinkson paid him twenty-five dollars !"

The brass-buttoned officer did not appear either surprised or grieved at this shrill announcement ; but, quietly brushing from his coat-sleeve the crumbs which Johnny had emitted at the same time, he addressed himself to the meal ; and the symposial delinquencies of Amos were more than atoned for. The man did not come around again for money. The military gentleman, evidently, had a genius for strategy.

Amos, returning from Miss Garr, had just time to observe that this festal warrior was also an utter stranger to him, when the latter crowding up to the daughter, observed, smiling and eating with much intensity :

"Good evening, Mr. Dinkson ; there is room right here for you."

Amos again excused himself, and approached the seat of Miss Amelia Clayton. George Lang, who sat beside her, had been the centre of a merry and vivacious company during the whole repast : for it was in such scenes, where champagne flowed liberally on all around him at his own expense ; and where his tongue sparkled, like

the wine, with bright bubbles, that carry head-ache and heart-ache to the too confident drinker — it was in such scenes, that George Lang had acquired the epithet of the “Irresistible.”

Amelia had been unusually still. She had watched and listened. Seeing Amos come toward her, she made room for him by her side. Here, she engaged him in a little pleasant conversation till it was time to ascend to the ball-room. Amos thought he would go back to his family.

“No, Mr. Dixon,” said Amelia, “I would not go back there. Come with Mr. Lang and me.”

Arrived in the ball-room again, Amelia requested George to take her home. The stock-broker disappeared obsequiously after his coat and hat.

Amelia turned towards Amos a calm, serious face, and looked straight into his honest eyes: “Mr. Dixon, you have been basely imposed upon.”

“I know it, Miss Clayton,” and he must have been very much ashamed of himself, for he blushed and stammered when he said it, “I know it, Miss Clayton, but, then, the boys — the boys enjoyed their suppers!”

“I am sorry to have been in the same company with any one capable of such” —

“Ah!” sighed Amos, “if *you* blame me for it, I shall be sorry that I fed the hungry.”

Just behind the smile in the two gray eyes bent upon Amos, there came that strange light, which is the herald of tears; but George Lang, Karl, and Miss Garr were upon them in the next moment; and the four took their departure from the scene.

Amos followed their carriage, for some distance, on his way home. As it disappeared, this thought was in the

sigh that went after it: "On the whole, it would be better if the United States government paid its volunteer officers on this coast, in gold instead of 'green-backs;' but then, I've got my money back, ten times over — in sympathy, in sympathy!"

CHAPTER VII.

AMOS DIXON IS INTRODUCED TO PESTALOZZI, AND
HIS SYSTEM.

It seemed to Amos that he had now a worse trouble than Aunt Owen's disappearance had ever caused him. What made it worse still, he did not know what this trouble was. When he reasoned about it, it did not seem a trouble at all — it seemed a delightful ecstasy. All the pain was akin to gladness; yet all the gladness was akin to pain — a sort of bitter-sweet of doubt and trust. But then he lost his appetite and grew pale. He must be sick!

He hummed certain of Moore's Melodies over his desk in the counting-room. He caught himself writing "Amelia" for "amount" in his ledger. He read the poems on "Sympathy," in the weekly papers. He was surely sick!

Nothing before had ever disturbed his sound sleep of health. Now he lay awake long into the night, to sink into confused dreams; and — what struck him as unaccountably odd — his dreams were only distorted shadows of his day thoughts. He walked over pleasant, sunny lawns, with the tall, graceful figure of a young woman — when, of a sudden, a huge door would clap to after him, and he would find himself in a great, windowless room, with walls of massive stone and iron, with nothing to illuminate the darkness but the strange light of two gray

eyes bent earnestly upon him. As these were filled and dimmed with tears, the darkness pressed upon him such a weight of horror that, in a struggle for breath, he would awake and think of Amelia Clayton; and, lapsing into slumber, would dream the same dream over again.

By day, he was subject to moods. He had a strange feeling of wasting. It seemed to him that he drew nothing from the light and air around him. He was feeding on himself; and himself was one thought. It is true, he was sometimes elevated beyond the level of his ordinary joys, but he was always sure, soon after, to be depressed as far below that of his ordinary sorrows; and these sudden changes seemed the flood and ebb tides of an ocean all his own. At the thought of Amelia Clayton, his eye would kindle and his cheek glow with an unnatural warmth; and, at the thought of George Lang (which always came soon after), he would turn pale, and his hands would feel cold. "I've got the fever and ague!" said Amos Dixon.

Having made this astute diagnosis, Amos thus addressed Mr. Gloverson, his employer: "I am a little ill. I think I will take my week's summer vacation, dating from to-morrow."

A burly, red face was turned upon the pale one of Amos. This, with the whole head behind it, taken in connection with a very short neck, seemed the premature ending of a very short and very thick body. Eying his cashier a moment, the senior partner of the firm of Gloverson & Co. exclaimed, "A little ill! Why, Dixon, sir, you are sick! I know what a sick man is, when I see him, Dixon. You are sick, Dixon, sir; you are sick!"

"I hope it won't last longer than my vacation week."

"Dixon, sir, you be — you — I give you a week to

get well in, and another week for a vacation. Here, you fellow there!" (calling to a young man at another desk in the counting-room) "we'll take turns here till Dixon gets well."

"I can just as well keep on to-day, now I am here," said Amos.

"O Dixon, you be d——d; and take care of yourself. Go home, and don't let me see anything more of you till you get well. Then, and not till then, your vacation commences." Panting with the unwonted excitement of his feelings and the extraordinary exertion of his oratory, Mr. Andrew Gloverson continued, with this impressive and unanswerable peroration, "If you don't get well, sir, you shan't have any vacation at all."

"Well, I'll go; but I could have stayed to-day, just as well as not," observed Amos, submissively, as he put on his hat.

"Oh! you be d——d," was the affectionate reply of the chubby merchant, — a euphemism, by which any unexpected goodness, on the part of his cashier, was invariably visited; and which would be gladly omitted here, were it not for the injustice that would accrue to the character of Mr. Gloverson. His lady friends will read it, "you be dashed;" and, if they do not learn to forgive this wickedness in the fat old gentleman, his story and that of his silent partners will have been written to very little purpose.

"Dixon, sir," pursued his employer, as Amos still hesitated on the threshold of the counting-room, "Dixon, sir, you know I never go back on my own judgment. You are sick, sir; and get out of here this minute, sir, and take care of yourself, old fellow. Blue mass, blue mass, my boy! Dixon, sir, take some blue mass!"

Amos went forth.

As Andrew Gloverson succeeded in getting his portly old form upon the high stool left by the invalid, he was heard to mutter, between two long breaths, "That Dixon be d——d; he is too good for this world. I'd do anything for him."

There is no telling what medicine Amos might have taken, had he not, on his way home, remembered this was Monday, the very day he was expected at Miss Garr's school. He changed his course a little, therefore, and it was not long before he knocked at what had, at one time, evidently been a corner grocery.

The door was opened by a small girl, with large dignity for seven years and six months; also with precocious feet, and a premature air of grandmotherly cares about her face, — and Amos was ushered into the primary school-room.

The temple of Miss Sophia Garr's ministrations was an architectural illustration of demand greater than supply. Here were to be found all the progress, and picture theories of Boston, in a building, to say the least, considerably behind the times. The groggery once was the school-house now. As in some countries the cross is erected over the spot where a murder has been committed, so here, on the walls where once stood decanters of deadly drink, now hung such mottoes as these, "*Dare to do right*;" "*Be virtuous, and you will be happy*;" "*Never tell a lie*;" "*Honesty is the best policy*;" "*Make hay while the sun shines*," etc., etc. These now were the law here; and Sophia Garr was its prophetess.

Amos was dreamy and embarrassed. For some time, only commonplaces passed between him and Miss Garr.

He engaged himself in the contemplation of the charts hanging around him. He looked from the chart of Forms to the chart of Colors; and from the chart of Colors to the chart of Animals, and was lost in the study of a collection of blue cows, yellow sheep, and green bears — all artistically arranged with an eye to action, keeping the beholder in constant fear that the blue cows will devour the green bears, and that the yellow sheep will be the violent death of the blue cows.

He found no relief in turning his attention to the children. As they sat there silently before him, there was something in their bright, confiding faces that awed him more than so many adult visages ever could. They were more than so many men and women can be — for men and women can never so bend to one will. He could not tell how, but he felt near the presence of Deity itself. The souls of the little creatures seemed to him so naked and so new.

A short recess had been announced. The children had gone out; and their exemplary teacher was about to address herself to business, that is, to Amos Dixon — when a small boy came bawling into the room. One hand he flourished in the middle air, as a signal of distress. With the other, he seemed to be engaged in the futile attempt to shove back his tears.

“What’s the matter, now?” burst from the thin portals of Miss Garr’s face.

“Why, Jim Baggs licked me!”

Of course, it did not go well with Jim Baggs, after school; but Amos is, to this day, under personal obligations to him for “licking” that boy. The account of the pugilistic encounter was so amusing, that Mr. Dixon for-

got all about his embarrassment. When, therefore, the scholars were assembled after recess, he was able to give his whole attention to what Miss Garr termed a "philosophical treat."

Order restored, that lady held up before the little people a top, and demanded what they were going to have now.

"A Object Lesson," was the unanimous answer.

"What is the plan of the system?"

"It is a system of drawin' out!" shouted (by rote) fifty shrill voices at once.

"There, that's right; a system of drawing out," said Miss Sophia, with a glance toward Amos; "now answer singly as I call upon you. Who was the inventor of the system?"

"Pest — pest — pest" — said a little fellow, with a silver lisp.

"Next?" said the teacher.

"Pestilence!" shouted a fearless girl, with a curly head.

"This child has not been in school long," remarked the Garr, explanatorily. "Next?"

"Mithter Lozzy!" exclaimed a sinister-looking small boy, from a suit of clothes, in which well nigh everything was worn out — but the patches.

"That's right — Pestalozzi," said the teacher. "You see, my dear children, as I have often told you, intelligence and virtue are not always with the rich!"

Elevating the top again, she continued: "Now what do I hold this by?"

Several little hands went up, in token that their owners could tell, if they dared.

"Well, what do I hold it by?"

"By your hand," was the answer.

"Next!"

"By your thumb and finger."

"Next!"

"By the peg!" said the confident voice of the premature little girl, who had opened the door to the visitor.

"Right!" observed Miss Garr, triumphantly. "Now who can tell me the technical (this to children!) name of the peculiar form of the top?" Turning to Amos, she remarked: "You will certainly be surprised at the originality of some of their answers!"

"Come, the technical name of the peculiar form of this top?"

Only one hand went up. To Amos, *sotto voce*: "Now listen! — for something philosophical." Then to the owner of the hand, the boy with the panoply of patches:

"Well, what is it, Sammy?"

"Teacher, please may — may I go out?"

This peripatetic philosophy was too much for the composure of the two adults. The Object Lesson was discontinued.

"Children, you may take your slates and write what you please; but don't interrupt me by any questions," said Miss Garr, as she shouldered her pick-axe, figuratively speaking, and contemplated the outcroppings of Amos Dixon's pale face — "The poor fellow," thought she, "is evidently troubled by my affectionate conduct toward Mr. Schmerling, the other evening at the ball. Well, I'll make him happy and draw *him* out, too!"

"How did I like the ball? I should have liked it better, if I had had better company. I was obliged to be with that Schmerling, the whole evening, — that stupid Dutchman!"

"What! Mr. Schmerling stupid?" exclaimed Amos.

"Certainly. Whenever he did say anything, which was not often — it was so commonplace!"

"Why, to my eyes he appeared the greatest gentleman in the room."

"Ah! the jealous, designing rascal!" was the mental exclamation of Sophia; while the angels might have seen the gleam of her descending pick-axe, as she said, aloud: "I wouldn't marry Mr. Schmerling, if he were a nobleman."

"Indeed?" observed Amos, unconcernedly.

"By the way," she continued, "isn't it perfectly shocking how people are marrying of late? I see by the morning paper, that there were a hundred marriages in this city alone, last month."

"That is a subject that comes home to some of us, now," sighed Amos, as if thinking aloud.

"What, Mr. Dixon?"

"Why, marriage."

"I don't *really* know," said the school-mistress, with a smirk, as she withdrew the sharp eyes which had transfixed Amos, and held him up, like a blue-bottle fly, to her contemplation.

"There may be another one soon; mayn't there?" asked Amos.

"Another what, Mr. Dixon?"

"Why, marriage, of course."

There was a flush on Miss Garr's face — not so much of maidenly modesty, as of unexpected success. She did not think it proper, just then, to look into the visitor's countenance, or she would surely have been puzzled to find it paler, instead of more crimson, after such a speech.

"I don't *really* know," she simpered between two squirms, "it depends a great deal" —

"I have always expected it, ever since the night I called on you at Mrs. Clayton's."

"What gentle violence!" thought Miss Sophia, as in her heart she cursed the little children whose presence prevented her fainting into the arms of the object of so long a search. As it was, she could only lean her head faintly in her hand, and look away from him, in ecstatic silence.

"Yes," mused Amos, "I have always expected it."

"But then this comes so sudden upon me, Mr. Dixon,— that, — that — you'll excuse these tears."

"Then it grieves you, Miss Garr?" said Amos, looking into her face for the first time during the preceding conversation.

"Not exactly, Mr. Dixon; but I — I" —

"Never like, I suppose, to part with an old pupil," observed Amos, to help her out.

"That is one thing," sobbed Miss Garr, glancing at the children before her, who were now deeply interested in the scene. The little girls had commenced crying, too; and the little boys were looking daggers. Sammy, the peripatetic of rags, shook his head and fist at the man who had made his teacher cry.

"Yes," sighed Sophia Garr, through her tears, "to think I shall never meet them all again!"

"It will not be a runaway match?" demanded Amos in surprise.

"No, certainly not," was her answer.

"Mrs. Clayton knows of it, and will consent, of course?"

"She knows of it; and has tacitly consented," whimpered Sophia, not very sorry that she had made the dis-

closure of her expectations to Mrs. Clayton, as it were, on trust.

"Then you will certainly meet them again at her house."

"Meet them at her house!" exclaimed Sophia, forgetting her tears in her surprise. "What on earth will Mrs. Clayton do with fifty children in her house?"

"Are they expected to have fifty children?" demanded Amos, in stupefaction.

"They? — who? — what are you talking about?"

"Why, George Lang and Amelia Clayton! Haven't we both been talking about them all along?"

If Sophia Garr ever did come near fainting, it was then and there. The long-sought ingot at her touch had turned to sand-stone, and almost crushed her. Her first thought was an angry one; and — so strange is human nature — it took the innocent Amelia for an object.

"Humph! cry for *such* an old pupil! She never can marry George Lang. He wouldn't have her."

"Then they are not engaged?" asked Amos.

"Certainly not; such a thing was never thought of. Mr. Lang is the business agent of her mother."

Amos believed he would go; and he went rather suddenly. "I must find a back street," thought he, "where I can halloo!"

Having, in reality, thus relieved himself, he bent his steps toward his own little room. His fever and ague were cured, without the help of blue mass. He could now think of Amelia with warmth; and of George Lang without coldness. Hope had risen to him out of the ashes of Miss Garr's anger.

CHAPTER VIII.

PREPARATORY.

THE next morning, Amos Dixon went to his work as usual. To him, in the counting-room, at about ten o'clock, entered Andrew Gloverson.

"What! you here, Dixon?" exclaimed the wheezy merchant, in amazement; and a fat avalanche of under-jaw fell suddenly, disclosing a glacier of white teeth, with its yawning chasm of open mouth.

"Yes, I am here," was the placid answer of Amos.

"But what are you here for? I'd like to know whether I have any judgment at all; I said yesterday you were sick."

"I was; but I've got over it."

"I'm afraid this is some of your d——d goodness, Dixon!" and Mr. Gloverson shook his head incredulously. "Did the blue mass do it for you? — eh!"

This "eh" was rather in triumph than in interrogation.

"No; I didn't have to take medicine at all!"

Down again came the merchant's heavy under-jaw. The upper part of his face, taken with his chin, thus disconnected, looked one great obese exclamation point of surprise. The power of speech was finally restored to him: —

"Now, look here, Dixon, sir, you get out of here! Do

you think I'm going back on my own judgment? When I say a man is sick, he *is* sick!"

"But I never felt better in my life."

"Oh you be d— you — you Dixon, sir. If you'd taken blue mass, it would have been a different thing. I gave you a week to get well in; you have done your job in too short a time. That's overwork, Dixon, sir. You know I don't overwork my employees. Now you get out of here; and don't let me see you till your week is up."

Large drops had risen to the brow of Mr. Andrew Gloverson. The Castalia of his eloquence, you see, was unusually troubled.

Amos saw that he must retreat, and, as he did so, launched this Parthian arrow of speech:

"Well, my summer week's vacation commenced yesterday."

The arrow had pierced the enemy's affectionate heart, as will be seen by the following exclamation, which reached the ears of Amos as he disappeared:—

"Oh you be d——d!"

The cashier was for some time at a loss whither to go, or with what to busy himself. After much deliberation, he resolved to go and find Mr. Schmerling, and see how that gentleman amused himself with nothing to do. He liked Karl, and besides, reasoned Mr. Dixon to himself, Karl visited at Mrs. Clayton's, where Amelia had never yet invited him to call.

Mr. Schmerling was not at his hotel. So Amos, remembering now that he had often seen the sign of George Lang, on Montgomery Street, resolved that he would look for Karl at the office of the Stock and Money Broker.

Entering the front room of this prosperous establishment, Amos recognized, in the wiry Mr. Shallop, the same gentleman who had made such an unceremonious entry into Mrs. Clayton's drawing-room, several weeks ago.

"When will Mr. Lang be in, sir?"

"He's just gone into his private office," answered Mr. Shallop, his small eye running, like an electric current, from Mr. Dixon's face down the crease of one of his pantaloons, and up that of the other, to the face again: "Won't I do, sir?"

Eying, in his turn, this pigmy Gothic of manhood, from gable to ground and ground to gable, as if to determine the question, Amos replied: "No, I believe, sir, you won't do."

"Well, sir, knock at that door, sir," and, in the next instant, Mr. Nelson Shallop was again intently climbing about over his accounts.

Amos entered the private office, as he was bidden from the inside, and, sure enough, Mr. Schmerling was there. Slightly embarrassed, Mr. Gloverson's cashier took the seat offered him. Was he not in the presence, too, of the man of whom he had unjustly been jealous? "By the way," began the artful Mr. Dixon, "you will excuse the liberty I take, Mr. Lang, but I really want to congratulate you on your good fortune of some weeks back."

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Dixon;" and the broker was as pleased as he looked to be. It was an ill-wind, etc., he reasoned to himself. This fellow would not have come here, if he were not interested in stocks. He must have some money laid by to invest.

"It is astonishing how Americans can make money," said Karl.

"Yes, it was rather a lucky strike," remarked George Lang carelessly, for the benefit of Amos, of course. "My friend Mr. Schmerling and I were just speaking about it."

"There seems, really, to be as much gold in stocks, as there is in the mines themselves," observed Amos.

"That is just what I tell my old friend here," said George, delighted at the turn things were taking.

"But then, the vineyard, George, the vineyard," broke in Karl, dreamily. "Think of a Rhine Valley in a republic, and the luscious ingots of the vine — the quartz of God's golden sunshine!"

There was no sunshine in the face of George Lang, at this moment. It seems that the broker's very confidential and lucrative offer, in connection with the 'Dorcas' mine, had thus far been powerless to blight the Sonoma vineyard which flourished in the German's picturesque imagination.

"But I don't think much money can be made at ranching, in California," remarked Mr. Dixon.

"This is a capital fellow, and will be of use," thought George Lang to himself.

"Well, we'll see for ourselves in a week or so," Karl said, "when we go up to Sonoma."

"Very well," rejoined the broker; "wouldn't you like to accompany us, Mr. Dixon?"

"Yes, do, Mr. Dixon!" exclaimed Karl, rejoiced at the idea of more company. "It will remind us so much of our jolly old student-tours in that other land of the grape."

"I think I will, or, I am sure I would," Amos replied, "if you were going right away. My summer vacation commenced to-day; and I came here this morning to see if Mr. Schmerling wouldn't" —

"Why not go to Sonoma, to-morrow?" interrupted Mr. Lang; "we can all be ready for the boat at noon."

"Certainly, certainly," said Karl.

Not long afterwards, Mr. Dixon took his departure, agreeing to meet Lang and Schmerling at the Sonoma boat the next day; and thinking it very lucky indeed that he had found so pleasant a way of putting in the week of his exile from the presence of Mr. Gloverson. "I might be a little ill after all," Amos thought. He did not, he was sure, feel so well after meeting Mr. Lang. There was something so cold and heartless in that gentleman's ways. At any rate, Mr. Dixon contended, he needed exercise. A long walk would do him good; and that is why, of course, he went a mile out of his way home, *via* the Folsom Street docks, and past the "elegant house," said to be the residence of Mrs. Clayton.

"George, I am glad that I know Mr. Dixon," remarked Karl, after Amos had left the private office.

The broker eyed his old friend for a moment, with a look of one suddenly roused from a brown study: "Dixon? oh! he is an oddity."

"Yes, George, an honest man always is."

"It must take a long time to make an honest man, like him," rejoined Lang; "they get so wrinkled before they are done."

"Wrinkled goodness, George, is better than smooth villainy. It is not in the polished marble of Paros, but in the rugged quartz that you look for gold."

"Well," and the light upon the broker's face was as that upon the sculptor's, when the clay before him yields to his skillful manipulations some unexpected success; the same gleam of easy triumph was Mr. Lang's, only

more sinister to look upon, — “well,” pursued he, “it is queer what jammed, battered trumpets this goodness often speaks through.”

“Had I not known you so long, George, I would think this sneer in earnest.”

“Ah! I have you there, old fellow,” Lang exclaimed, with a laugh, “goodness generally blows a cracked bugle in this world.”

Schmerling did not seem to hear this remark. His eyes were fixed in the rapt, dreamy way so frequent with him — his whole face like one of those sweet pictures of Domenichino, which, from their quaint old golden frames, have sped their saintly smiles from age to age and century to century. For, about Karl, too, was the nimbus of this faintly uttered thought: —

“It was not in the sublime organ-swells of the thunder, or in the horror of the earthquake, or in the rage of the whirlwind, but in the ‘still small voice,’ that the Almighty himself spoke to the prophet on Mount Horeb.”

“But to come back to the point, now,” observed the stock broker, still in the best of humor, but with the same under-current of design that had floated his share of the foregoing conversation, “to come back to the point, now, this Dixon has no spirit, and you know it.”

“No spirit? I have not seen any *man* impose on him yet.”

“Then his intellect, — you can’t think he has any of that, too?”

“Most assuredly he has,” said Karl, “we have seen nothing to convince us to the contrary. All his *faux pas* have come, not from too little head, but from too much heart — too much natural politeness, that is, benevolence; — but I have an engagement at the hotel

(rising and approaching the door of the private office). No, George, believe me, Mr. Dixon is no fool."

"There goes one, though!" muttered Lang, as the door closed between him and Karl. "He has a high opinion of that Dixon. That's just what I wanted to know. Dixon on my side of the argument, and down comes the vineyard, and up go stocks — yes, twenty thousand dollars premium!"

And the broker busied himself about his papers, pausing occasionally, to think how he might also add the earnings of Amos — if there were any — to his side of the milligramme scales of argument.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE UNITIES ARE VIOLATED.

GEORGE LANG, Karl Schmerling, and Amos Dixon were on board of the little steamer, as she pushed off into a haze of two elements. For, on that noon of early summer, it was hard to tell where the water and the sunshine met. The beautiful bay was unruffled; yet there was an invisible frost-work of balm in the atmosphere. The cool water and the warm sun seemed to have mingled in mid air, by some strange principle of attraction; and, as the three sat on the open deck, they imbibed a sort of *agro-dolce* of iced sunshine. They sailed through an abiding mirage, and breathed it in.

They passed Alcatraz on the left — Alcatraz, where Nature built the first fortress, in the defense of her own beauty. No ship, entering the Golden Gate, has dared to bring tidings of a more beautiful bay, beyond the seas.

Farther along, two lines of grand hills opened up to them; and these, on one side, led like a giant stair-way, up to the distant mountains. He who has been becalmed in the Mediterranean, and has floated past the bleak hills of Valencia, through the glorious sunsets, beyond the coasts of Andalusia, to the "Pillars of Hercules" — may form a shadowy idea of this scenery; but there is really nothing like it in the world elsewhere. The trees may have been cut down on the rugged highlands of Spain. They rarely grow on those of California.

There is a gigantic jealousy in the rude breasts of our occidental hills. They would suffer nothing to come between them and the sun, their "Heavenly bridegroom with golden locks."

A variation in the course of the little steamer would suddenly open up long dreamy inlets, that were lost in mazy turns, like one of Karl's reveries. On the uplands of one side, bared of the merest bush, could be traced, as on a map, the track of the winds for centuries. On the other protected side, struggled into life the low, scrubby manzanita, madrone, and California lilac, almost hidden in the laughing dimples of the hills — so low and sparse, indeed, that Nature seemed trying to hug them closer to her bosom.

The landscape wore its loveliest tint — not green, and not sere. The freshness, succeeding the rainy season, was gone; but the withered decrepitude of the long drought had not yet come. Everything stood poised in rich ripeness. The California year was in her early womanhood.

The little party were alive to the scene, but each, of course, in his own way. There was a Saxon solidity of pleasure and thankfulness in the heart of Amos; it followed his eye up the steep slopes of the distant mountains, nearer to heaven. To him, Monte Diabolo, with its gigantic slopes and mighty peak lost in the haze of a summer cloud, was the sublime pathway of the mind up towards the thought of Deity.

This is not Amos's description of his feelings; for he said nothing. His soul went out in an aspiration of gratitude, compelled by a religion preached from the mountain tops, the waters, and the sunshine. This flimsy word-ladder has been builded in the vain attempt to follow after him.

Nor was this all he felt or thought. In the natural pauses of exalted emotion, his gratitude was large enough to take in his portly employer, Mr. Andrew Gloverson, to whose rough kindness he was indebted for the privilege of being where he was. The reader may have noticed that kind hearts go in small companies, like mating birds. They attract one another. The wicked form the galaxy whose infinite numbers fill the highways of the sky ; while the good hearts stand out in bright constellations. But Andrew Gloverson, by himself, was, to Amos Dixon, the Great Bear in the heaven of kindness.

Then the eye and mind of Amos, reverting to the deck, would dwell stealthily on George Lang. He wondered what a queer sort of a man the broker must be, who did not want to marry Amelia Clayton.

George Lang looked upon the scene as Achilles, in the prime of manhood, might have looked upon the elaborate tapestries of Helen. Pretty work indeed ; but he enjoyed it better when he was younger. The day, however, he considered as a good omen. The sun had shone upon the opening of his scheme. If he was thrilled by the rugged mountains at all, it was when they reminded him of the warfare of the old Titans — when he considered them piled up in some rebellion of Nature.

Thus, on the same heights where George Lang would have stormed heaven, Amos would have wrestled with the angel till it blessed him.

Karl Schmerling seemed a part of the scene, so intensely was he absorbed in it. Sometimes it appeared to him a fairy landscape painted of molten jasper and amethyst, sapphire, and chrysoprase, on a canvas spun of sunbeams ; but the background of hills was covered with shadows, which, to his steady gaze, grew darker and

darker, till they swallowed up his fairy landscape ; and, for relief, he turned his eyes back to the deck of the steamer.

Reassured, he would again look forth upon what seemed Nature in her calm siesta — when, of a sudden, the whole scene would appear as his own soul spread out before him, by some strange metempsychosis of oriental belief ; but, as he drifted out upon some rivulet of a dream, or followed some flecked cloud of a fancy, he was sure to end in the sombre presentiments of the shadows on the mountains.

Turning again, his mind, too, would go the natural pilgrimage of religion, up the distant steep. It was, however, the religion of old cathedrals, dimly illumined through windows stained with the uncertain light of saintly lives — the beautiful religion of carved pyx and mosaicked crypt, of organ-peals and vesper hymns — in short, the religion of dreams. But wheresoever he built his airy basilica, the dove, from over the chancel, dropped such shadows from its wings that the lamps were hidden at the shrines, and a spectre gloom of presentiment filled the aisles and arches.

Finally, turning to George Lang, he said, “ I have a strange warning of some impending evil.”

The broker was troubled. “ So have I, Karl ; ” and he had.

“ The brighter the light, the deeper the shade,” sighed Karl. “ In laying my heart ‘ against Nature’s own,’ I have felt the chill of the shadows more to-day than I ever did before.”

George’s presentiment had arisen from the face of his friend. The succeeding silence was scarcely broken till the party left the steamer for the Sonoma stage. The

dust then impeded conversation, and almost everything else but the headlong speed of the coach.

A very good dinner, to the accompaniment of native wine, was achieved at the little hotel of Sonoma. Till the carriage for which they were waiting arrived, nothing remarkable occurred; only a waiter insisted that Amos was a *Landsmann* of his, and addressed him repeatedly in German, to the no little discomfiture of Mr. Gloverson's cashier.

The carriage they were awaiting came at last. It belonged to Captain Tambol, an acquaintance of Lang's, who, hearing of the projected trip, had prevailed upon the two friends to be his guests during their stay. The captain himself was the driver. He was a medium-sized man, whose enthusiasm for the culture of the grape found some expression in a face rouged by the bottled sunshine of many a harvest. Upon his nose, in particular, the wine-god had wrought deftly, in *basso relievo*. There, the vintages of the dead years had left their monumental pimples.

On learning that there were three instead of two in the party, the captain's gratification was, by a progression of his own, simply multiplied by three; and his hospitality was large enough for an indefinite series, with the same ratio.

After a ride of seven or eight miles through the dusk and early moonlight, "Lurley Ranch," the princely domain of the captain, was reached. The house, an elegant villa, stood on a knoll; and, as the excursionists discovered the next morning, commanded a view of miles of valley. All they observed now was, that it was entered through a flower-garden, whose collected sweets went out in a *vivâ voce* greeting to the moonlight. A

supper was already waiting on the porch, behind trellis-work overgrown with clambering roses. And Mrs. Tambol was the presiding priestess of this grotto.

Mrs. Tambol may be described as the mind of which her husband was the body. She was Captain Tambol idealized. In her face hospitality lit up a pleasant smile — the garland to your goblet; not a beacon light to warn you of the place where many a bottle had been wrecked. She was all neatness, elegance, and refinement: he, all bustle, wassail, and hard-fisted kindness. And yet, it was a pleasure to see them together. They seemed to fit each other. They reminded you of the green leaf and the rose, on the lattice of their own porch. They were a perfect contrast, which is perfect harmony; and that was the only issue of their long married life.

The supper over, the guests were not permitted to go to their beds, till the table was well covered with empty bottles. As Amos struck his pillow that night, he thought he would advise Mr. Schmerling to purchase a vineyard. A slight headache the next morning, however, caused him to hesitate, and he preserved a strict silence during breakfast.

After that meal the captain observed, "Now, gentlemen, your horses are ready. We will spend the day in visiting our neighbors of the valley. Every one thinks his wine the best; and I am no exception to the rule. But I am going to take no unfair advantage of your judgments; so we will call on my cellar last."

And they galloped away over hill and dale, with the Sonoma Creek on one side, and sunny vineyards on the other; and the far-off mountains towering above all. Crops were discussed, cellars explored, and wines upon wines tasted. It would take a steady head to withstand

such a flow of hospitality as met them in the course of the day. The genial husbandmen of the valley seemed to be conscious that God gives no charter with the rain and sunshine. The manna they had gathered belonged to all.

In the afternoon, the party returned to the captain's. They were, to say the least, in the merriest of moods. The path from the house to the wine-cellar crossed Sonoma Creek — here a deep stream, and spanned only by a narrow plank. From the general elegance of the surroundings, a handsome bridge might have been expected. Herein was the dark design of the captain. The way to the cellar was as easy as the *descensus Averni*, but inexperienced drinkers generally fell into the water on the way back.

The captain's was one of the largest cellars yet visited; and it was remarkable how many "particularly choice" wines he recommended to their unbiased attention. "Just one other kind," and, after that, "just one other kind" had been tasted, until it was impossible for Amos to say exactly where the roof of the cellar commenced, or where the casks and bottles left off. On coming into the open air again, things to him were even more confused. "I have been using these eyes for the last twenty-eight years," said Amos, "and they never served me so poorly before."

Arriving at the plank, and conscious that he could never cross it, he proposed that they should try the recuperative virtues of the swimming bath, which was one of the luxuries of the magnificent host.

In the bath-house, Amos was unusually communicative. He launched out into what he said was a "funny story," and after several parentheses, broke off suddenly on to the subject of love. In the mean time the rest of the

party had disrobed and were swimming about joyously. Amos had all this while been struggling to untie his cravat: "Love's what's thematterwithme (hic)," observed he, between divers tugs at the knot in his neck-tie, and hiccups at the knots in his speech. "Love is an 'noblin' passion, — a d'vine pash — (hic). I love a being who is a noble, hic, and d'vine — no, not a woman — but a seraph, hic, and her name is hic" —

—— Here the cravat broke, and Amos having taken more note of time, than of what he had accomplished, plunged headlong into the water, clothes, hat, boots, and all.

Just as he was rescued from drowning, the dinner-bell rang. What was to be done? Amos was better prepared for a slab in the Morgue, than for an appearance at the dinner-table before the ladies; for several of the neighbors had been invited, in honor of the occasion. Yet a certain maudlin pride had taken growth, after the wetting; and Mr. Dixon expressed a confidence in his ability to do justice to his dinner. So the host went surreptitiously to the house for dry clothes; and finally succeeded in getting Amos into them, and a place at the table, where he looked as if he had been dressed for the arduous *rôle* of a scarecrow.

All went merry at the meal. Such a second flood of talk and laughter passed over the reticent Dixon, that he was for awhile lost to notice.

"Well," said Mrs. Tambol, after she had seen every one abundantly provided for, "I suppose it would be useless to ask you where you have been to-day; since you must have visited all our neighbors?"

"Yes, my dear," responded the captain, "we have visited everybody, with the exception you know of."

"Then we have skipped some of your neighbors?" demanded George Lang, suspiciously seeing in this fact some hidden argument against vineyards in general.

"Yes; we have one who calls himself our enemy."

"And we are real sorry about it," joined in Mrs. Tambol, "for the enmity is all on his side."

"He is what we call a 'Piker,' you see," remarked the captain, quietly, "and he stole some of our sheep. Somehow or other, he refuses to be forgiven for it. We don't care so much about losing the sheep; but we do about losing a friend."

"Your 'Piker,' captain," said Karl, "has only verified the saying of the old Latin sage: 'Whom we have injured, we hate.'"

"But, captain," observed George, "I would hardly grieve so about it. In fact, I never learn to like some friends till they imagine themselves my enemies. I dote on a good enemy."

"Indeed!" exclaimed three ladies at once.

"But love," mumbled Amos, with an inebriate synthesis of which spelling can convey no idea, "love's adiffer-entmatterintirely!"

Lang regarded the last speaker for a moment, then, turning to the ladies, with a knowing smile, observed: "Not so different a matter after all. It is only another phase of the same phenomenon. Love is divided from friendship by a thin partition, and from hatred by a thinner one still. A sigh or a glance may let one into the other. If I were to write a play, it should dwell much upon the desperate love of my heroine for, say, a consumptive young man, whom she should lay out on a board, in the fifth act, and proceed to dissect deliberately with a butcher-knife — loving him to distraction all the

time, but carving away, nevertheless, because to her strong love is added one grain of offended pride."

"He has been in the wine-cellars all day," said one lady, in a low voice, to another, as if it were her duty to apologize.

"What handsome eyes!" whispered the other in response.

"And moustache!" joined in the third.

Then all three aloud: "Oh! that would be horrid!"

"Yes, but perfectly true to nature," was Lang's careless answer.

"Oh laws! Mr. Lang, you don't believe it?" ejaculated one of the aforesaid three.

"Certainly I do. It would only be an extreme case — simply human nature played on the octaves!"

"'Oman," interpolated Amos, among the stares and smiles of the entire company, "'oman is the (hic) loveliest of her sex. 'Oman is the gentliest (hic), finest part of (hic) of man!"

"You are not only perspicacious, but right, Mr. Dixon," continued Lang, with a wild diablerie in his eye. "The old Aztecs, on the outskirts of whose aboriginal empire we now are, were probably the greatest lovers of flowers the world has ever seen; yet the old Aztecs had a feminine way of sacrificing one another to the gods, and eating one another, done up *a la brochette*! The ladies, bless their souls, are fine and beautiful; and love what is fine and beautiful; but they love the butcher-knife, too. Why, I have detected the condensed spirit of forty butcher-knives, in the way some of them can say '*s-h-e*!' of the woman they hate!"

"Well, George," said Karl, "we won't dispute about tastes, but if I were ever to write a play, I would rep-

resent woman's love, like charity, that 'believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.'"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Mrs. Tambol. The three lady guests said nothing. George Lang was their hero.

"But, on such an occasion as this," continued Karl, "we should leave Thalia for the lyric Muse. Horace has been strangely running in my head for the last fifteen minutes."

"That is not all that's got into his head," whispered one of the lady partisans of George.

"Yes," Karl went on, "I have been thinking of Horace's *carpe diem*. I beg your pardon, ladies, I am not going to be learned. *Carpe diem* means, freely translated, 'Go it while you can.' The only revenge we can have on the sorrows of the past — the only sunshine that can gleam from ourselves outward on to the clouds of our future — is to be found in the rational enjoyment of the present."

"How about the ant and the cricket?" asked the captain.

"The fable of the ant and cricket," answered Karl with a smile, "was written for the encouragement of ants, and insect life generally. This building of storehouses for a future which may never come, is not the part of creatures who are ruled by reason. As Cicero said, nearly two thousand years ago, 'You plant the tree, but another reaps the fruit.' It is all well enough to be a benefactor of your race, but it is another thing to erect hospitals for imaginary ills."

"Then it is not worth while to get rich," observed George Lang.

"If you *are* rich," rejoined Karl, "enjoy it. If you are poor, be contentedly and elegantly so. If you are asked

to drink your neighbor's wine, and you want it, drink it. If you hear a band of music playing on the street, keep time to it. If you meet a pretty face, enjoy it for its Maker's and its own sweet sake. Thank God that the landscape is yours; and if you see a fine sunset, look upon it as a gorgeous fresco, which Nature has painted on the sky for your particular benefit. *Carpe diem!*"

The short silence ensuing was thus broken by the hostess: "Mr. Dixon, you have scarcely said a word this evening. Shall we take this as a slight upon the whole company?"

Every eye was upon Amos. He raised his somnolent orbs, for a moment, and muttering: "Cap'm, where am I going to sweep to-night? Ladies, I love, hic! — I love you all!" his head fell upon his arm, and Mr. Dixon was borne from the table, fast asleep.

CHAPTER X.

FOR WHICH LOVE IS MOSTLY RESPONSIBLE.

IN the middle of the night, the whole house was aroused by a scream of smothering agony. The echo was caught up by some sharp, nervous voice, and hurled back into every corner and crevice of the building, the terror translating itself as it went into "Fire! fire!" Forms were seen issuing from the rooms, and hurrying hither and thither, while new voices swelled higher and higher the diapason of horror.

Then succeeded the minor tones of curiosity, "Where is it? where is it?" No one had seen it. "But Mr. Dixon is not here!" "Where is Mr. Dixon?" And a simultaneous rush was made for the apartment assigned to that gentleman.

A subterranean noise answered their vigorous knocking; but the door was not opened. The knocking was repeated in an ecstasy of clamor. Only the same earthy sound came from within, borne on the sickening effluvia of coal oil. "Bring a light and break open the door!" And the ladies retired to await the result. "Oh!" exclaimed one of these, in retreating, "Oh! that he should be burned to death in this way, and I be unable to see it — all for forgetting to slip on a dress when I got up!"

The door gave way at last, with a recalcitrant whir. In the middle of the room were found a great pile of books, and on the top of them an unwieldy book-case,

and, scattered here and there, on the top of that, the fragments of a kerosene lamp. "But where is he?" "No, he is not under the bed." "Mr. Dixon! Mr. Dixon!" A sepulchral groan issued from somewhere about the middle of the room. "I am here," was soon after heard. There was no longer a doubt as to his whereabouts. The book-case removed, the excavation commenced. The labor was soon rewarded by the discovery of the top of Amos's head. It was naturally concluded that the rest of him could not be far off. The exploration, therefore, was conducted with redoubled energy; and the entire Dixon was finally extricated from this "catacomb of departed authors"—almost smothered, indeed, but a sober man. He refused to make any explanation; yet, as he was shown to another bedroom, he simply remarked, "I have had my temperance lecture."

Lang, always cool, had partially dressed himself before leaving his room. As he was passing back again to retire, a night-capped head was thrust out at him, and Curiosity coming right behind it demanded, in a female voice:—

"Mr. Dixon must have broken his lamp? What caused that horrid noise?"

"Mr. Dixon has probably been boring for oil, in his sleep," was Lang's hurried answer, as he passed, "and" (claspings his nose with his thumb and finger) "I think Mr. Dixon struck it."

George Lang was not so acute as he thought himself. It was, indeed, a maudlin dream of Amos that had brought about the catastrophe; but a dream that left an impression behind it—that grew into his life, and bent him with it. He dreamt that he saw Amelia Clayton

standing on a distant height, beckoning him to approach. At first he had to toil over rocks and rivers ; but he kept on, for he was conscious that these must be passed. As he came nearer, the ascent was graduated into pleasant terraces, succeeded by flowery meads ; and just as he had caught her own encouraging smile, down came the books and book-case, up which he had, in reality, been clambering.

"There are rocks of reform to climb over, and green terraces beyond," thought Amos to himself, the next morning, instead of making his appearance at breakfast. "And I must commence right away, or I will never reach that smile, outside of a dream."

About ten o'clock Mrs. Tambol tapped at the door of the room occupied by Amos, and, bidden to enter, found him sitting moodily by the window.

"I have brought you some tea and toast, Mr. Dixon. Will you have it? Pray now do ;" and she arranged it daintily on a stand. "How do you feel this morning, Mr. Dixon?"

Amos, taking no notice of the tea, toast, or question, looked up, at last, and said, "I shall make a clean breast of the whole matter to-day, at dinner, and ask your pardon before the whole company."

"Oh ! you have no pardon to ask, Mr. Dixon, and, as for the company, the ladies have all gone home. Your friends and the captain have ridden off to the other end of the valley, and will not be home to dinner."

Amos, for all his heroic resolution, heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"Mr. Schmerling and the captain," she continued, "were going to come and see how you were, and ask whether you would accompany them ; but I would not let them disturb you."

"What a glorious thing a true woman is!—such a bridge over a man's failings!" exclaimed Amos, evidently thinking aloud. Then, recollecting himself, "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Tambol; I am very much obliged to you; for I really do not want to visit any more wine-cellar to-day."

Mrs. Tambol retired, and Amos, finishing his light breakfast, strolled out by himself. Following the windings of the creek, it led him into a green solitude, where he whiled away the time till dinner. Gradually, everything but the dream faded from the memory of the past twenty-four hours. He felt more than ever before his unworthiness of Amelia Clayton. He returned to the house, with a wavering hope, but with the firm conviction that to win her he must first win himself—that to gain the sunny uplands of her smile he must climb higher up the steeps of manhood. This was the shadowy conclusion he came to. It did not frame itself in words; for it was too indefinite for words. He did not know how he was to compass his object. He only knew that he was unworthy; and resolved to *do* hereafter, with her always in his mental sight. So, he felt sure, he must clamber over rocks and up rugged pathways.

It was very late that night when the captain and his two guests returned. Amos, therefore, did not see them till breakfast the next morning.

"Now," said Lang, at that meal, "we have discussed the vineyard question in about all its bearings. Let us have the light of Mr. Dixon's dream upon that important subject."

"Yes, Mr. Dixon, do tell us your dream," joined in the captain, with a very hearty laugh.

"For the consequences of my dream I have, I hope,

Mrs. Tambol's forgiveness already, and I now ask yours and the company's."

"Tut!" said the captain, "I should never have forgiven myself, if my wine had not told on some of you."

"But are we to have no benefit from your dream, Mr. Dixon?" demanded Lang, with a leer.

"Mr. Lang," and Amos looked him squarely in the face, "you have had all the benefit you ever will have from that dream. I have begged pardon for its consequences, once; and the subject, in the way you look upon it, is painful to me."

Lang was thunderstruck. This was a display of firmness in the person on whom he had calculated for, at least, a week's amusement. Feeling conscious that, in the dead silence succeeding, every eye was upon him, the stock broker covered his retreat with a flaunting smile, and a flank movement of speech. "Mr. Dixon wanders from the subject; we were asking his opinion on vineyards, as an investment, and, especially, in the case of our friend here, Mr. Schmerling."

"I should be sorry to say anything to influence Mr. Schmerling in a question of so much importance, and of which I know so little," answered Amos.

This, though known only to himself, was a worse defeat for Lang. He had calculated on Amos to sustain his own pretended opinion. "Well, then," said he, desperately, "to sum up all, there is no improved vineyard, such as Mr. Schmerling wants, for sale, now. He could, as the captain says, buy the land and plant one of his own; but he is not disposed to wait so many years till his vines shall grow. Besides, he has received a warning from heaven itself against so jeopardizing his little all. Haven't you, Karl?"

"I have received," said Karl, "a strange presentiment, and I shall, on the whole, wait till some larger cultivated ranch is for sale."

"That's sensible, Karl, at last!" was Lang's exclamation of repressed delight. He did not know that the presentiment had done more than all his arguments, in bringing about this conclusion.

The captain did not look pleased. He liked Karl, and wanted him for a neighbor, but he had before this exhausted all his reasoning, and now said nothing.

"You see, captain," observed Karl, answering this dissatisfied look, "in a year or two I shall be able to buy a vineyard here that will suit me. I will offer twice what it is worth, if its owner will not otherwise part with it. I am to be part owner of the 'Dorcas' mine."

"What mine?" demanded the captain.

"The Dorcas."

"I never heard of it before."

"That may be. It is owned and controlled by Mr. Lang and a few of his particular friends. As a great favor, George assures me, he has prevailed upon them to allow me to invest my little capital with them."

This was the first intimation Lang had received of Karl's consent to his proposition of some time since. He was so overcome by this unexpected success, that he had suffered his friend to make more of the plan public than he could have wished.

•"Then you have finally awakened to your own interests, Karl, old fellow, have you?"

"Yes," replied he, warmed by the glow on the broker's face, "we are again embarked together, George; and may we float as peaceably as we did in the olden time, down the windings of that dear old Neckar!"

And Karl lapsed into one of those day-dreams of his. He seemed to be drifting through the arches of the old stone bridge, of the river he had named, toward the Rhine. He saw again, crowding the banks, the little dingy houses of Heidelberg, with their sharp gables and their moss-grown tiles. From the church of the dead Electors, he heard the same old bell, that has beaten the march of time for centuries. His eye ascending with the sound, dwells upon the far-famed castle, and sees again the statue of Justice, with her scales, still towering above the ruin. But far beyond looms the giant peak of the Kaiserstuhl, thrusting his spears of shadow down past the *Molkenkur* into the valley, even to the face of the silent dreamer; and his dream fades, and Karl is lost again in the same presentiment of evil.

George Lang was now anxious to return to the city. The captain insisted that a Chinaman should drive his guests directly to the landing; and was only sorry that the expected call of a neighbor on business prevented him from doing that last service himself.

There was the real feeling of two good natures in the parting of Amos and Mrs. Tambol. She was a true woman, and there was something in him that made him know it. "You," said he, "have ironed some of the wrinkles out of my clothes that were wet; and I think I have learned, since I have been here, that a good woman can smooth the wrinkles out of a man's character."

George Lang bade the hosts good-by in a calm, gentlemanly manner, with a smile at regular intervals in his smooth talk — nothing so rough as emotion about it. A mournful light mantled the face of Karl, as he said, shaking hands with the captain the second time,

"We will certainly see one another again," — while something strangely told him that they never would.

And the carriage drove away, leaving the wine-grower and his wife standing side by side at an opening in the lattice of the porch, with comfort around them, and content within.

Karl watched them dreamily as he was whirled away. "The angels," muttered he at last, "that were brides-men in heaven when that match was made, must yet hover about here on earth. The reflected sheen of their guardian wings still keeps the chain bright. There is a fitness in these mated ones, which is the lingering shekinah of the Great Master who linked them together. And," he went on in thought, "they fit the scene so well; and yet, the scene is so melancholy, for I shall never see it again."

The little steamer was reached in due time. The return was not so pleasant as the trip from the city. The violent afternoon wind of summer was blowing; and nothing broke the monotony till the wharves of San Francisco were in sight.

The three fellow travellers had been strolling leisurely about the lower deck, ready and anxious to leave the boat as soon as she reached the dock. They at last stood clustering about a stanchion, each clasping it with one hand, as if, in their listlessness, intent on holding it in a perpendicular position. Karl, his eye wandering off from one passenger to another, finally observed: —

"What a queer study the human face is. If you are pleased, you will always see somebody to reflect back your smile. If you are sad, you will always meet some look of sympathy in the strangest crowd. In the great-

est sea of faces, you will always find one with some reflection of the overarching heaven in it."

"Well, Karl," remarked Lang carelessly, "I think you would have some difficulty in finding that one in this crowd. I don't see it in that sailor there, for instance."

Something very like a shudder came over Karl, as he looked at the person indicated. "No, George, that face looks more as if it had been cut out of the infernal side of Michael Angelo's 'Last Judgment.' I wonder why it annoys me so to look at that brutal sailor?"

"It is simply the incongruity," answered Lang. "It would not shock you to see that face behind prison bars. Your sense of fitness would then be gratified."

"That may be partly so, George; but then, why should he bring back to me so forcibly that same presentiment of evil?"

"Oh, pshaw, Karl! think of something else," broke out Lang impatiently; "you got clear of danger when you got clear of vineyards."

"God knows, I try to think of something else," sighed Karl, as his eyes rested on a gray-haired old man, leaning against the bulwarks. "There, George," he exclaimed after a pause, "there is the face — even in this crowd — the *one* with a reflection of heaven in it. That old man has a sorrow at his heart. Some one is waiting for him above and beyond, where his sad eyes are looking. Do you see him?"

Amos had for some time before been regarding the subject of Karl's apostrophe. Just as Lang had got his eye riveted in the same direction, the sailor with the sinister face came along, dragging a line which he was getting ready for the shore.

"Come, old man, stand one side; you're in my way."

The old man did not seem to hear.

"Stand one side, I say!" again shouted the sailor, in anger.

The old man did not stir. The sailor, coming up to him, struck him ruthlessly with the heavy rope. A woman came running from the other part of the boat, screaming, "My father is deaf! my father is deaf!" The old man had scarcely staggered into his daughter's arms, when Amos, with a well-aimed blow, stretched the brutal sailor on the deck.

"Served him right!" shouted a voice from the crowd. "Served him right, eh?" echoed the sailor, with the addenda of several oaths, as he crawled to his feet again, and made for his assailant, "now it's my t—"

This speech was interrupted by a sudden call toward the deck. Amos had watched him leisurely and floored him with another blow.

"Served him right, *agin*!" shouted the same voice from the crowd.

At this point, it would have been difficult to tell which slunk away more sheepishly — Amos or the sailor. Something seemed to come over the victor all of a sudden. He turned quickly on his heel, and walked off to the stern of the boat. Karl heard him mutter, as he passed, these incomprehensible words, "There, I have been fighting! What would *she* say?"

Amos had scarcely answered this question, to the utter annihilation of his hopes of being better for Amelia's sake, when he was approached by Karl and George, followed by one or two of the curious crowd.

"Mr. Dixon," exclaimed Karl, enthusiastically, "I'm

your friend for life !” And he embraced Amos on the spot, after the cordial manner of the Fatherland.

“Let *me* congratulate you, Mr. Dixon,” said George Lang, shaking the hand of Amos, who was now seriously embarrassed at finding himself a hero, against what he imagined to be the judgment of Amelia. “Let *me* congratulate you, Mr. Dixon,” George repeated; while the undercurrent of his thought ran something this way: “This fellow puzzles me; the less I say, may be, about stocks to him, the better.”

“Now, your friends has all had their say,” observed a bushy gentleman, in rough boots and ill-setting store-clothes, and whom any one would recognize as an “honest miner,” on a visit to the city — “Now, your friends has all had their say; ’low a stranger to have his.” And the same enthusiastic voice of the crowd was recognized. “I say, sir,” he continued, “bully for you, sir; bully for you. I only wish’t I’d been a leetle nearder to that scoundrel afore you reached him. I don’t say what I’d a done, but I like what you done. You done well, and there’s my hand. I’ve got an old gray-haired father, to home in the States, and it’s sot me a thinkin’ of him. Now sir, you suit me, sir; you bet. Come and take a drink.”

For a moment the face of Mr. Dixon presented a diorama of quickly-varying expressions. Every stage was marked, as his thought went through the desert pilgrimage of his late memories. He hesitated only for an instant; but it was a case of eternity in an instant. For, in that time, he had wrought an illuminated chronicle of recent events, one chapter on the top of another, on the palimpsest of his face.

"Come up to the bar," repeated the "honest miner,"
"come up and take a drink!"

"No, I thank you," said Amos, "I do not feel at all
like drinking," and he walked out, with his fellow pas-
sengers, on to the wharf.

CHAPTER XI.

BECKONING.

“WHY is it that misery takes to water — that wharves and bridges are the Academy groves and gardens of the miserable? You see that young man, with the threadbare coat, looking dreamily at the ship spreading her wings for an Eastern flight? For him, though unsuccessful here, there may be neglected gold in some New England glen. That ship is going toward his home — toward the precious hearts that absence has assayed. So his reveries go silently outward and onward toward the rising sun, like birds of passage; and the great, mysterious ocean is their element. You remember, George, on London Bridge, day or night, the wretches that look so wistfully into the muddy Thames, or lie sprawled upon the stone seats over the arches; sleeping without fear of the wickedness of others, because armed with their own utter misery; laying their hearts against the troubled river's, and sleeping or dying to the same sluggish lullaby of the waters? Where in all Rome, but on the *Ponte Sant' Angelo*, will you find a poor man so miserable and sullen that he will not beg? Then, those wandering, houseless, singing tradesmen of my own Germany, the *Handwerksburschen*, those knights errant of the bundle and staff, those troubadours and minnesingers of the nineteenth century — why do they so congregate upon the Bridge of Boats across the Rhine at Manheim,

gazing into the legendary river as into an Intelligence Office? What is the famous Morgue by the Seine, in Paris, with its one or two thousand suicidal corpses every year, but a temple erected to Misery, by the side of the object of its worship? The old theory of the humors may be right after all. The temper of mind may depend upon the fluids of the body. And beyond all that, by a Gnosticism never taught, may not the great, mysterious ocean, the visible eternity of liquids, be the divinity of which these fluids, our feelings, are the emanations, and to which they will return? The wretch, then, who goes to the water-side, may be impelled as to his 'Ephesian dome,' or — since misery is a protracted death in life — as a parting spirit to the bosom of its God!"

These were the queer ideas Karl Schmerling had enunciated, one day, in the hearing of Amos. The latter gentleman had thought them over several times since, and may have got them somewhat confused. At least, he almost always found himself grounded in a side issue — a sort of unexpected bayou of the watery argument — that is, he always ended in believing himself miserable.

And it is hardly to be supposed that a man whose feelings, scientifically analyzed, would give twenty parts love to one part hope, could be perfectly happy.

The very night after his return to the city he could not stay in his little room; he must walk. It was moonlight, and he strolled leisurely out of his narrow street into a broader one, and then turned at right angles into a broader one still — Folsom Street. It was certainly odd. He could not have had any will at all in the matter.

He was moved by the same magnetism, gentle reader, that has before now moved you to pass by the house of the person you love or hate. You remember you did not reason much about it — only you were pretty sure that you would not be seen. And if you were, what could be more accidental?

Mr. Dixon resolved that he would be ascetic. So he allowed himself to pass the castle of his princess only twice. Simultaneous with his second transit was that of a shadowy profile across the window curtain of one of the upper rooms. Amos recognized it in an instant. The outline of that chin and nose and shoulder could not be mistaken. Their impress seemed to linger on the curtain, even after the light had disappeared from the apartment. It was — Sophia Garr; and Amos turned away more wretched than ever. His hungering eyes had asked for bread, and they had been given a stone.

It was now that Karl's aquatic theory came in a bewildering deluge upon the mind of Mr. Gloverson's cashier. The highest mountains of his thought gradually disappeared, leaving but the Ararat of this one conviction, and this consequent resolve: he was miserable; he would take to water.

He could not go to Folsom Street wharf, because he would have to pass the elegant house again, thereby breaking his stoical resolve. He kept on, therefore, in the direction he had last taken, till, reaching the route he customarily took on his way to business, his mind subsided gradually into its wonted channel. He turned the usual corners and threaded the familiar thoroughfares, involuntarily: for he was thinking the old thought — the thought of his dead mother. Her image, who had been all confidence in his future, always came to him with the halo of a resurrected trust.

But then to-night suddenly came doubt again — doubt that somehow always came with the remembrance of poor old Aunt Owen. “Why do I not hear something about her? Or shall I find her after all?” For here, the idea of Amelia Clayton flashed upon him. This was indeed, his regular *curriculum mentis*: his mother, Aunt Owen, Amelia Clayton — that is, trust, doubt, undefined hope. Thus, the feelings of Amos in their queer regularity, were like a sinking river. They would disappear from the sunlight, go on in darkness, and rise to the light again. But was he always, like the waters, farther along in his course?

He was certainly farther along in his walk than he had any conception of. Still thinking of Amelia, and, more especially of the dream he had had in Sonoma, “Yes, yes,” he soliloquized, in a deep feeling of unworthiness, “I must clamber over rocks, and up steep” — Boom! went a cannon, apparently right under the nose of Mr. Dixon, so deafening were the echoes — when, all at once, taking his bearings, he found himself at the foot of Telegraph Hill. “Ah! a steamer is coming in!” he said half aloud, as he commenced in reality to clamber over the rocks and up the steep pathway of that rugged eminence. There he could have the best view of the bay, and the Golden Gate; for again had it suddenly occurred to Amos that he was miserable, and that he would take to water.

Having reached an open place in the hill-side, he paused to breathe and to watch the steamer passing noiselessly below him. There was something so unreal in the scene — so much like a dream; the impressive silence, the moon-lit cliffs, and of all things, himself, alone, in such a place and at such an hour! How much it was

like the eerie landscape of the vision, in which he had seen Amelia Clayton beckoning to him from the heights!

Thinking this, he looked forward, and, several hundred feet beyond, on a beetling crag above him, he saw — what? he rubs his hands over his eyes and looks again — a figure outlined against the sky! Yes, a female figure, and beckoning to him! Some covering — it might have been a shawl, it might have been a cowl, or it might have been a shroud — was thrown over the head and shoulders. It seemed, in the distance, all clad in one color, more ghastly than white, and indescribable — something like that mysterious gray of old armor. He rubs his hands over his eyes again, this time to discover whether he is really dreaming; and, convincing himself to the contrary, beholds the same distant figure beckoning to him in the moonlight.

For a moment Amos is startled and confounded, as the most valiant of us might have been. But, ghost or not, he resolves to approach. Toiling hastily up the path, he draws nearer and nearer to the figure, still beckoning — till a sudden turn in the ascent conceals it from view. He feels that only a few moments more will bring him face to face with — what? His breathing is quicker; he tries to convince himself that it is because the ascent is more rugged. The ascent, however, is not more rugged; and his pace is slower than when the figure was in sight. His breathing is quicker, because the figure is out of sight — because its place has been taken by a strange dread, akin to that which the bravest throw about an unseen foe, or an undefined danger.

All at once he comes in sight of the crag again, and finds it — deserted! More confounded than ever, he goes up to the very spot the shape had occupied; but

can discover nothing of its retreat. He looks down toward the bay. The steamer, like some black monster, has disappeared in the jungle of the distant shipping; and, in the lessening light, the silver of the waters is now deadened into lead. He looks out toward the land. The sparse huts and houses below him, at the foot of the crag, seem farther off, from the very silence in which they nestle; and away beyond, over the hills, the white grave-stones of Lone Mountain, like sheeted spectres, march slowly and noiselessly out of sight in the increasing darkness. Amos seems to himself to be the only living thing in all the landscape.

While he stands yet musing on the scene and on the strange occurrence, the moon goes down into the far-off ocean; and Amos is left, on the very heights to which he had been beckoned, to find his way home, in darkness and in doubt.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. DIXON MAKES A BAD IMPRESSION.

A WHOLE week had now passed since his return from Sonoma, and Amos had not seen Miss Clayton. In the sense of his own unworthiness, and in default of any other explanation, he had come to consider the mysterious figure on the height as symbolical of his fortunes with that lady. She had beckoned to him only in the deceitful moonlight of his own conceited fancy.

Amelia, indeed, had never given him any warrant to visit the elegant house on Folsom Street, and he had not called upon Miss Garr, because not sure what kind of a reception she would give him, after the *denouement* of the social hour spent in her school-room. In this verbal joust in the lists of matrimony, Miss Garr had, as you might say, lost her breastplate. If she were not really wounded, at least her secret had been exposed.

Ruminating on these matters, and making his way toward Front Street one morning, Amos was met by Karl Schmerling, and presented with two tickets for the Philharmonic Concert.

"It is to take place this evening," said Karl. "Mr. Lang is to go with Miss Clayton, and Miss Garr has expressed a wish to go, also. You will, I believe, from what she says, be perfectly willing to go with her?"

"Perfectly," was the answer of Amos, somewhat embarrassed by the expression on the face of Schmerling.

Mr. Gloverson's cashier, in reality no great scholar, was here guilty of a false reading. He had taken Amelia Clayton for the subject of Karl's knowing smile, when "Sophia Garr" was the real nominative.

So Amos, parting from Karl, was launched into a sea of uneasiness, as deep as his own feeling and as broad and long as the whole day. He resolved, with much shrewdness, that he would be early at the elegant house on Folsom Street. He might thus get a glimpse of Amelia; perhaps be of the same party with her and George Lang.

Mr. Dixon was early.

Amelia had just begun to think of her toilet, and had retired to her own room at the ringing of the door-bell. Miss Garr had been only an hour at the adornment of her person. Wondering at the premature arrival of Mr. Dixon, she sent word that she would be down in ten minutes, and accordingly made her appearance—three quarters of an hour afterwards.

And in making her appearance she was doing a great deal; for she was attired, for the first time, in her new white opera-cloak and her Paris bonnet. Her school term had closed. She was no longer the priestess of Wisdom, but stood before the startled Amos, the goddess, full-armed, in all the silken panoply of conquest. A whole month's earnings, and more, had been marshaled for this desperate onslaught of the forlorn hope.

"Well, here I am!" gushed forth the gorgeous Garr, turning round deliberately, and seeming to have forgotten something, but really illustrating her idea of a tableau vivant, for the admiration of Amos.

"Good evening," stammered that gentleman.

"Oh! good evening, Mr. Dixon;" and she extended

her hand imperially, as if Amos were expected to kiss it rather than take it within his own. It seems Miss Sophia had merged her usual politeness in the contemplation of her unusual splendor.

As Miss Garr did not sit down, Amos asked meekly whether they would better wait for Miss Clayton. "I think not," was her answer; "Mr. Lang will not be here for half an hour yet. Let us walk on."

And they walked, discussing the pleasures of life in Sonoma. Miss Garr was of opinion that it must be delightful thus to live away from the gayeties of the city. "It would," she said, wrapping her opera-cloak artistically around her; "it would free one from the petty annoyances of fashion, and from the more lavish expenses of dress."

Mr. Dixon was not sure that he should like to live always in the country he had been visiting. There was something so gloomy about their wine-cellars!

"Oh! I don't think any one would like to live in the country always, Mr. Dixon;" and the amiable smile on Miss Garr's face wreathed itself in beautiful harmony with the yellow flowers of her new Paris bonnet. "Not always, Mr. Dixon. One would certainly sigh for the faces of the crowd, and for the elegant air of well-dressed men, and — you will excuse me — of well-dressed women, too."

They walked on in silence.

"Our friend, Mr. Schmerling, performs to-night, I believe," at length observed Amos, casting his bread listlessly upon the receding waters of conversation.

"Yes," and it came back to him after not many seconds — or rather came back to the personal adornments of the lady by his side. "Yes, and all the *élite* of the

city will be there. We may expect to see a great deal of dress."

Thus, during the whole walk to the Concert, Miss Garr used her tongue very much as the natives of Australia do that interesting weapon, the boomerang: toward whatever topic she sent this projectile of speech, she had the talent always to bring it back very near to her opera-cloak and Paris bonnet.

They reached the Academy of Music soon after the doors were opened. Walking boldly toward the entrance to the Dress Circle they were stopped by a man, with this question:—

"Have you a reserved seat, sir?"

"Certainly," replied Amos, presenting his tickets.

The man grinned: "You have no reserved seat, sir!"

"Then I must have one at all costs."

"All taken! Right up those stairs!" and the man pointed laconically toward the ascent to the Upper or Family Circle. Amos was taken aback, yet what could he do? His tickets entitled him to the best places in the house, but Karl, who rarely knew the day of the month or week, and never professed to know which was east or west, had thoughtlessly omitted to secure seats beforehand during the day. Mr. Dixon ascended the steps, therefore, with a queer misgiving that they were leading him and the proud Garr up to that Olympus of theatrical gods, the Gallery. He was relieved to find himself landed at last one remove from the circle of his apprehensions—only *sulla riva del settimo cerchio*; though Amos did not know a word of Italian, and never read Dante.

Sophia Garr absorbed as many as three minutes in arranging herself and her costly apparel into a seat. This done, she cast her eyes about her for the first time.

Only one or two of the reserved seats below, in the Dress Circle, were yet occupied. The gas was about half turned on. The ladies around her of the same tier, did not wear opera-cloaks and Paris bonnets.

Miss Garr was fast becoming a vinegar volcano. The first eruptions were in little remarks about cheap seats, and travelling second class. The fact of the matter was, she had caparisoned herself for the express purpose of seeing and being seen ; and, in justice to the lady, it must be allowed that the Upper Circle was not calculated to gratify her in either of these respects.

"Mr. Dixon," she said, "I can not stay here. I would much rather go to the Theatre, where we can surely get respectable seats."

The opera-cloak seemed to be the lexicographic authority in which Sophia had found this word, "re-spect-a-ble ;" for she had inserted the hyphen of a look toward the new garment, between each enunciated syllable of that word.

They went to the Theatre.

Here the seat must have been a "re-spect-a-ble" one, for Sophia was now all smiles. Between acts, she endeavored to impress Amos with the magnificence of her ancestry, in the State of Maine ; and related to him many incidents of travel in Portland and Boston. This proved highly interesting — to herself and the spectators in the immediate neighborhood. The rapt attention of these latter was, however, mistaken by our improvisatrice of prose as the natural devotion of all well-regulated eyes to her new opera-cloak and Paris bonnet. She forgot the unsatisfactory interview of her school-room, in what she considered the success of the untried and irresistible blandishment of dress.

Miss Garr also allowed Amos to look through her opera-glasses. But even this last burst of confidence did not seem to cheer him. Miss Garr's opera-cloak and Paris bonnet had evidently come between him and Amelia Clayton, whom he had expected to see.

The curtain finally dropped on the last act, and the two sallied forth upon the street.

What unimagined horror! Who would have expected, on that very evening, and while Sophia Garr and Amos Dixon had been quietly seated in the Theatre, that the first rain of the season would come on? — rain, even before its time; virulent rain; rain, with the memory of the deluge in it — with some of the old hatred of sinners!

Amos quietly surveyed the situation, and — took a sudden resolve. "I must dampen the fire of this woman's unfortunate feeling," thought he, as he was assailed by innumerable hackmen, — a storm within a storm. — "Have a carriage, sir?" "Take you right along for ten dollars!" "Take you for seven dollars!" "Take you and your lady!" whispered one, at last, with an appeal to Sophia's anxious face, "yes, you and your lady for five dollars!"

Amos led the way haughtily through the bustle, the noise, and the rain, to a passing street-car. Inwardly, he enjoyed the effect of his preconcerted villainy. Yet, in spite of his resolve and the chuckle that packed it hard down, his good heart sent up a scarlet protest to his face. It must have been a brilliant tapestry of blushes wrought upon his cheeks and hung about his ears; for, in his account of the adventure to Mr. Andrew Gloverson, the next morning, Amos said, that during the whole sojourn in the car he did not seem to be riding at all.

A strange conviction forced itself upon him that he was walking on his head ; and he had not ceased performing this imaginary feat, till the car stopped at the corner of Folsom Street.

Miss Garr had contemplated the rain-drops on her opera-cloak in ominous silence. Now, as she passed the lamp of the car on her way out, there was something about her oddly suggestive of a mammoth ale bottle on the point of bursting. The light, falling upon her face, disclosed every feature drawn, as if by some strange magnetism, toward her mouth. Her eyes, and cheeks, and nose all seemed nearer than ever before to her lips, and these were compressed in an agony of internal rage.

Leaving the car, the couple careered down Folsom Street, with the white opera-cloak flaring in the wind, like a flag of truce ; but the rain would grant no armistice, and poured volley after volley of penetrating grape, even on the peaceful ensign itself.

They skirmished under an awning, and the chivalric Garr made a breach in the door of a belated fruit shop. Here an artificial sigh broke through the quick breathing of the leering Mr. Dixon : “ Oh ! that we had an umbrella ! ”

The fruit vender was very sorry that he had just lent the only one he had. Miss Sophia preserved the same portentous silence, her face now looking, in a miniature way, like one of those clouds which sometimes break over mountainous countries, and deluge whole districts.

All of a sudden the rain stopped, and the march of two was resumed. They had proceeded about half a block, when the storm broke out again with redoubled violence. Nothing was left them now but to endure. “ If we only

had an umbrella!" once more sighed Amos, villainously. But he received no answer. Even the look, darted at him through the darkness, was not one of sympathy. To the higher intelligences, who hear, thought, Miss Garr was not silent.

If ideas go in a train, as philosophers say, those of the retired instructress must have run an express — an express over a suspension bridge, with the past on one side and the future on the other. Of the present — the dark chasm between — she would not think. The hopes of long maiden years had reached at the affections of the man by her side, but the parasites had clung to empty air. The mistletoes had died before the oak. The uncertain time to come must be laid out for new "prospectings." She tried to dwell on this, for there was some comfort in the belief that she already knew where to look for the ingot at last. But the present waste of capital — over a whole month's earnings — in the mine she was just abandoning! The thought of this would, in her own despite, come upon her with a new gush of anguish, at each renewed pulse of the angry storm. It was then that her face would assume a new likeness to some ill-boding thing.

Miss Garr evidently had never contemplated the expenses of hydraulic mining. When she considered the damage that water had done — the utter wreck and ruin of her new opera-cloak and Paris bonnet — all the harpy of her nature looked out through her fast-filling eyes; and her compressed, mute mouth was eloquent with direst prophecies against unmarried men.

Arrived at the door of the elegant mansion on Folsom Street, she could restrain herself no longer. Turning her back upon Amos, she burst out into angry, disappointed tears; and, without a word, went into the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

FANTASTICAL AND GARRESQUE.

THE next day, Miss Garr and Amelia were alone in the parlor. Mrs. Clayton had retired to her own room after lunch, leaving much sympathy behind her for the late trials of her old friend from the State of Maine. The indignant Sophia quietly cast off her moorings from a sofa, and tacked skillfully for an easy-chair, firing, as she went, this last shot at her sunken enemy —

“Well, I shall never have anything more to do with that wretch, Dixon!” This was preceded by a flash from her wicked eye, and followed by the report of an *imo pectore* sigh.

“After all,” said Amelia, raising her quiet eyes, “I fear you do him injustice. There must be some one to blame besides him; at least there always has been.”

“Nothing but his pesky meanness!” was the sharp clatter of Miss Garr’s shrapnell, at the rising ghost of her submerged foe.

“But let us not condemn him hopelessly, until we have heard his apology.”

“Apology! What is an apology to nearly a hundred dollars’ worth of dry-goods and millinery? This was the last purchase I had contemplated before marriage.”

A considerable pause succeeded. Miss Garr had either exhausted her ammunition, or dispersed even the ghost of her enemy. “Well,” she observed, at last, “I

should have paid more attention to the advances of Mr. Schmerling. Don't you think he would be an interesting husband?"

There was just a little of contempt behind the smile on Amelia's face, as she replied, —

"I have always thought Mr. Schmerling interesting; I never thought about him as a husband."

Amelia's contempt could not, then, have been for Karl, but rather for the practical way in which Miss Garr "prospected" the affections of men. So she did not tell the schemer — what she believed, on the testimony of George Lang — that Karl was engaged abroad. She thought she would let the scheme come to its own end.

"For my part," continued Miss Garr, "I think he would make a very interesting husband. I shall encourage him hereafter."

She was led to this by two considerations. She would thus, in fact, be performing two duties: first, that of securing the long-sought ingot of a husband; and second, that of getting Karl out of George Lang's way to Amelia. Miss Garr, moreover, became uncommonly dutiful after her own disappointment, and proposed to earn a little of her salary this very afternoon. Somehow or other, it had never occurred to her before why she was one of the family, and yet under hire. Her own sudden interest in Karl must have had something to do in the way of refreshing her memory.

"By the way, Amelia," and Miss Garr opened her guns immediately, "you never say anything about your own matrimonial prospects."

"I don't think them subjects for general discussion."

"With an old teacher and friend of the family, it would not be general discussion to open your heart a little once

in a while. Your mother and I have often wondered why you are so silent about yourself. Then, when you do talk, you talk so old for a girl of twenty."

Amelia smiled, as she changed her position on the cushion, with which, at will, a wide window-seat could be formed — smiled and looked silently out on the lawn.

"May we ever hope for some insight into that mysterious heart of yours?" insinuated Miss Garr, with mel-low emphasis.

Amelia still looked out of the window, as she said, not so much to her inquisitor as to the velvet grass, and the summer clouds, and the little wild birds that connected the velvet grass and the summer clouds by airy chains of melody: —

"The woman that knows her own heart is wise. She who knows it best will be the wariest of its secret. It is knowledge enough for one, but too much for one hundred."

Miss Garr was thinking how much more appropriate such language would be in the mouth of the widow of three husbands, and wondering whether she ever would be able to understand "that girl," when Amelia, still looking out on the lawn, continued, —

"I don't believe those birds sing their heart-histories to the winds. We hear their peans in the triumphal march of their own element of air. Their love-songs are meant only for the private ears of their chosen mates."

"Probably, then," said the practical, yet metaphorical Sophia, "you would tell *your* heart-history to your chosen mate!"

Amelia turned so as to face the court of inquisition, which sat now principally in Miss Garr's sharp, hard eyes.

“Every heart is a moated citadel, that is fortified by its own secret,” the young lady began. “In the little I have seen, and the more I have read of human nature, I have noticed that half the power of command is the power to keep a secret. But when I truly love and am as truly loved again, I can, at the proper time, and to the proper person, part with that one secret. In plighting troth, I will then be giving up what was but half mine.”

“But, dear Amelia, George Lang is so *interesting*.” (This word meant a great deal to Miss Garr; it was the whole of which the following were the parts :) “He is so talented, so good-looking, so attractive, so attached to you, and so rich!”

This was the pyramid of climax, behind which Miss Garr, now hopeful, rallied for a second onslaught—a pyramid from which the wisdom of thirty maiden years looked down upon the combat.

“Now,” exclaimed the Garr, in melodramatic confidence, “is n’t George Lang interesting?”

“Yes, Mr. Lang is interesting.”

“Come, now! and would be an interesting husband?”

“Yes, to the lady who might desire him for a husband.”

“And she is” —

“To you, I presume, personally unknown!”

Miss Garr’s bullets, it seems, however sugar-coated with disinterested kindness, rebounded in her own face. She lost the battle, then her patience; and left her guns and the room at the same time.

Amelia thus left alone, reclined quietly on the cushioned seat of the open window. The afternoon wind

was tempered by the foliage of the lawn into a gentle breeze. Only an occasional dreamy sound from the street broke in upon the strain of the same wild birds. It was such a scene as the memory always idealizes — such a scene as one sees best, the second time, with the eyes shut. And Amelia, yielding to the influences of the place and hour, was looking into a happy dream-land beneath her closed eye-lids. Pleasant paths commenced to lead from the real lawn near her through long imaginary vistas into the far distance. Each return to the reality was more difficult. Lost, at last, in the mazes of some orange-grove, away up in the uncertain empyrean, return was impossible. She was asleep.

Her face — that book of unwritten poetry in which the beauty was *born* of the soul within, not *made* by the regular dull lines of a school's ideal — her face was turned towards the lawn. One hand had fallen by her side; and the soft folds of her light summer dress rippled away from her half-buried arm, like silvery palm-leaves from their stem. The other hand rested lightly upon her bosom. Over her head, the curtains of rich lace and dark red damask swayed gently to and fro; and, as the white parted from the red, the space between them was filled by an elastic haze of crimson like that about her own eye-lids.

It can not be the birds — that sound from the lawn, low, uncertain, as from an Æolian harp in a ruin — those strange recurrent chords that separate and float away, the ghosts of music; then those bars from the air of the "Song of Friendship," that terminate so suddenly in a blare of discord — the soothing strain that succeeds resting upon the sense like a loved hand upon a fevered brow, till, swelling richly, it, too, floats away in a purple

haze of delicate harmonies ; — beginning anew, the tones that follow upon one another with such sweet hesitancy, as if they had taken airy shape and were startled at their own footsteps !

Is it the dream of the sleeping girl written on the air in music ?

Ethereal notes blend into a strain of inexpressible longing, to settle into the music of quiet hope, thus rising and falling, a jeweled carcanet of sweet sounds on the heaving bosom of the wind. Her head moving slightly, the simple *coiffure* gives way, and her long, brown hair falls in waving darkness on her cheek and neck. Suddenly and strangely the measure changes. Again the air of the "Song of Friendship," as by a capricious will of its own, shapes itself out of the echoes as they drift away into the summer afternoon ; and then all is quickly swallowed up in a bursting wave of tones, from the lowest depths of the octaves. There is no theme now, but a sort of confused memory of organ-peals. It is shadow music. . . . Amelia becomes uneasy and awakes.

Only a slight rustle of leaves is heard on the lawn ; but it might have been the wind.

The next moment the door-bell rang, and Amelia retired to her own room. As soon as her hair was again arranged in the same simple *coiffure*, she returned to the parlor.

"Oh ! Mr. Schmerling," was her exclamation on entering ; "how good of you ! You have brought your guitar, at last."

And she sat down in a chair opposite her visitor, and they talked about the concert of the night before ; how this overture was executed, and that aria rendered ; and

how Herr Bangoff touched the piano, in his great solo in seven sharps.

As soon as she could, Amelia prevailed upon Karl to play upon his guitar; and it was not long till the frets of that instrument were transformed into a little Jacob's ladder, leading up into the same dreamy heaven of all Karl's music.

That consciousness of a dual existence, which has been felt by almost every one, from the days of Aristotle to our own, suddenly came upon Amelia. "We learn things that we seem to remember," says the old sage.

"What *is* that?" asked Amelia, when Karl had ended.

"Oh! nothing — only a fantasia of my own."

"Is it not queer? It seems as if I must have heard that music before; but, then, it cannot be."

"You may have walked with the spirit of it," said Karl, smiling. "I have long had a theory that all music has a soul of its own. There are the old evil spirits of fire. Why can not there be the good spirits of sound? A great musician was never a great criminal. Echo was only the plaything of the wood sprites; and why can not harmony be the glad joining hands of the good spirits of air?"

"At any other time," Amelia rejoined, "I would say that your theory is as much a fantasia as your music. Now, this has something in it that makes me forget time. The remembered joys of childhood mingle with the events of to-day; and all my longings would seem to melt into fruition. This is sentimental talk, I know, but your wild music transports me into a cloud-land where one horizon spans the past and the future; and yet there seems to be a deep — a deep something, very near me, something like" —

"A shadow?" suggested the musician.

"Yes, yes, like a shadow — Oh! I know now, your music recalls a dream I have just had."

"Strange!" muttered Karl, "and you saw this shadow in your dream?"

"Yes, it was so near me, that I felt cold. I should have thought that it awakened me, only I am sure that the door-bell rang."

Karl thought silently of his presentiment. How came its discordant moan in the chorus of his good spirits of air?

"Then the music," continued Amelia, "the music sounds so weirdly familiar. When did you write it, Mr. Schmerling?"

"Very recently. It has never been committed to paper. It is merely an improvisation."

"Indeed? What do you call it?"

"The Language of a Dream!"

Karl might have told how the odd fancy of such music came upon him when he discovered Amelia asleep in the window, but for the unpleasant mystery of the presentiment, and but for the more explicable mystery of a sudden appearance.

The parlor door quickly opened, and Miss Garr was launched suddenly into the middle of the room. "I never! I beg pardon," she said, "I have lost my thimble;" and she bowed, as if she would retire. Of course, she was asked to stay, though she never thought of such a thing as finding company, if her words — and not her careful toilet — were to be credited.

By the way, it was fortunate for Miss Sophia's equanimity that she did not, from her room in the far wing

of the house, hear the guitar in the afternoon serenade of the lawn. Her hatred and jealousy would have had a little more consistence than shadow-music. A "claim" was hers from the moment she "entered" it in her maiden heart. Karl's dreamy freak would have entailed the dire consequences of her law upon both himself and Amelia. His guitar would have been looked upon as a trespassing pick-axe.

Miss Garr had heard the door-bell. It was, on a fair estimate, seventeen minutes and a half after she had learned from the servant of Mr. Schmerling's being below, that the radiant Semiramis achieved her sudden entry into the parlor.

— Where the subject of music was now dropped. As Karl had been a performer at the Philharmonic Concert of the evening before, he did not feel called upon to be the first to speak about that exhibition. Miss Sophia had been, in a manner, a performer there, too, so she did not feel called upon to be the first to allude to it. Amelia had already discussed the matter; and, of course, saw no reason why she should be the first to introduce it. Thus the whole subject of music, suddenly banished from the parlor, stood just at the door — on a point of precedence.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the conversation languished long for a theme. Love, though probably not more calculated than music to exist in the same air with Miss Garr — Love, with his gauze wings tied behind him, was dexterously "trotted out" to carry wood for that artless lady. Was not Love, indeed, a near neighbor, and blood relation of Marriage, that dearest thing to her pining heart? Love, of course, was a hallucination; but Marriage was reality enough — something that could be

measured, or weighed — more wisely, to be sure, by troy than avoirdupois. Churches, in fact, were better from their connection with Marriage. Were they not the great assay houses, whence the fame of the stamped ingot went forth, swallowing up even the name of the lucky finder?

“But then,” observed Miss Garr, the conversation launched, and fully under way; “but then, Mr. Schmerling, love is so hopeful.”

“Not so much so as it is counterfeit!” thought Amelia, as Karl, now the manifest centre of all Sophia’s hopes and mining speculations, carelessly rejoined: “I don’t know; I have seen many a moody lover.”

“Though you are not one of them?” was the artless question that bubbled up from the depths of Miss Garr’s innocence.

“What, I? I am what you might call a universal lover. That’s why I am not moody. I suppose, though,” and he sighed, thinking of his presentiment, which seemed to haunt him everywhere, “I have been rather moody of late.”

“I thought he loved me!” exclaimed Sophia, mentally. “You mean,” she said, “by universal lover, one who loves everything about his mistress — even her foot-prints.”

“More than that; I love all woman-kind!”

“Ah! I knew he would take some grotesque way of declaring himself. He shall be even more explicit.” This was expressed only in certain uneasy gyrations, and ecstatic attempts at a blush. She now essayed the “pleading tone” of the elocutionists; and her voice approached Amelia’s rich mezzo-soprano something as the dandelion approaches the rose: “You have,” in rejoin-

der to Karl's last remark, "you have, I presume, heart large enough to love the whole world, yet small enough to be absorbed by one?"

"Not exactly. For me, loving one would be doing injustice to thousands — in fact, to all the others."

"What a beautiful joke!" exclaimed the delighted Garr. It was plain to her that he did not want to divulge his secret before Amelia. She wishes that impertinent girl would excuse herself.

It suddenly occurred to Sophia that this "Dutchman" delighted in the beautiful — in poetical things. She, too, would put her language into fine raiment. Personal ornament, as a blandishment, was too expensive; besides, had it not signally failed on one gentleman? The reader, however, is tenderly spared much of the mixed metaphor and barbarous French which illuminated the carrying out of this resolve.

"Love," she said, among other fine things, "is the 'Comstock Lode' of the heart, marching ever, ever on, with relentless wing, to the last oasis of its pilgrimage, the Happy Isles of marriage, which are, I assure you, *paddy shadows ong Espang!*" (probably *pas de chateaux en Espagne.*)

Karl could not have paid much attention to this mosaic-work of rhetoric, for he looked at Amelia, as he went on to say: "I have come to believe that friendship or love, being built so upon the heart, is better than all philosophy, because the heart is better than the head. The intellect has deposited stratum after stratum of systems and creeds; and some Bacon or Luther has always risen, and always will rise, concentrating in himself the pent-up fires of an age, or a century, and has thrown, and will continue to throw them all awry. The

heart has always been the same constant river, rising beyond the clouds, and flowing to the same eternal ocean — winding and wearing its way through the primitive granite of Homer, on through the sandstone of Virgil, the feldspar of Schiller and the mica of Tennyson.”

“Indeed!” was the expression of intelligent appreciation from Sophia. She was sure it was her own eloquence which had drawn this from Karl. Amelia was silent. She was wondering why he should talk so, then and there. She probably did not remember that, in the gayest carnival, we will sometimes argue with our own sadness. In the presence of others we have it at so great disadvantage. Our sad heart can speak but to one hearer: we are continually confuting it before many.

“And all affection,” continued Karl, “is based upon a simple axiom. We are never to expect more than we give. It is a simple formula, $a = b$. Take away a , and b equals zero: take away b , and a equals zero. This is the equation of Love; and it runs through the universe — from Heaven, through the grave, back to Heaven again. Which is the lily that will open the gates of brass, a smile or a blow? — They have a simple way of preserving wine in Italy. A little olive oil is poured into the neck of the odd-shaped bottle. This will keep away the air for years. Pure love is charity; charity is the drop of oil that will preserve the wine of a whole life.”

Karl rose suddenly, and bade Amelia good-by. While performing the same ceremony with Miss Garr, his foreboding heart began its reply to his own speech — none the less bewildering because heard by him alone, and none the less convincing because it had, as it always does, the closing argument. Turning again to Amelia, from the open door, and shaking her hand as if forgetful

that he had done so already, he said: "Good-by; good-by!"

As he went out of the gate, Sophia observed, meekly: "He sees that he must relinquish one of us. He is a noble fellow" — which meant, of course, "He has chosen well."

"There is something," replied Amelia, "preying upon his pure, generous nature, of more consequence to him than either you or I."

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEREIN A SIMPLE QUESTION BECOMES HARD TO
ANSWER.

ABOUT five o'clock one afternoon, Mr. George Lang, Stock and Money Broker, and Mr. Nelson Shallop, his confidential clerk, were engaged in summing up the day's business.

"Mast'rly stroke, that, Mr. Lang — that last heavy spec'lation," observed the nervous little man of finance, counting away all the time at a pile of half dollar pieces, with that strange facility and correctness which seem to come from money itself, and act through just such human machinery as Mr. Shallop. "A mast'rly stroke, — sixteen, eighteen, twenty, — but a little, — twenty-five, thirty, a little dangerous, Mr. Lang."

"Yes, a little worse than selling short, under the worst of circumstances," answered the broker, as he rolled up the counted silver and put it away in a large safe. "I have known one of them a long time."

"Yes, so you've told me — fifty-two, fifty-five, fifty-eight — several times, — sixty," — and the marshaling of half-dollars proceeded faster than ever, the dross spirit of enumeration, in money, still working through the body of Nelson Shallop.

"He's a wary old fox. We'll have to look out for him," remarked Lang, over a stack of "Legal Tenders."

"Not so old either! — ninety-five, a hundred."

"I'd bet on his being nearer sixty than fifty."

"The devil!" was the filial exclamation of Mr. N. Shallop. "Whom do you mean?"

"Why, old Andrew Gloverson and his partner or partners, of course, if he has any — the firm of Gloverson & Co., on Front Street."

"Oh! I thought you meant that other old friend of yours, Mr. Sch —"

"Sh!"

This rather odd echo from his employer caused the confidential clerk to break off suddenly, and to look up into Lang's eyes, which were now turned toward the door of the office. A familiar form had just crossed the threshold, and now came toward them with hurried steps.

"Where is Schmerling?" and the startled face of Amos Dixon was gazing inquiringly into that of George Lang.

"I don't know," said the broker, looking uneasily at his clerk.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Mr. Shallop.

"That's just what I'd like to know," was Dixon's perturbed answer. "He hasn't been seen at the hotel for three days."

"Did they tell you so there?" demanded the broker, as his face became more troubled.

"Yes."

"You'd better go and see about it," suggested the invaluable Mr. Shallop, who seemed to be the mentor and man of action on the inside of the window, though his name did not appear on the outside.

George and Amos proceeded directly to the hotel.

"Any letters in my box?" demanded the former at the office.

"Nothing at all, Mr. Lang."

"Did Mr. Schmerling leave any word for me?"

"None at all, Mr. Lang. Mr. Schmerling," continued the dignified official, from behind the counter, "was seen the last time, three days ago, by the porter of his floor, entering his room with a guitar."

George now acknowledged that he himself had missed Karl at dinner on the day in question, and had not seen him since.

Arrived in the room Schmerling had occupied, George Lang's face grew paler than even that of Amos. There was a dreamy carelessness in the arrangement of everything about the apartment — so suggestive of the easy languor of the man who, to all appearances, might have just left it for a moment. On the table, for instance, lay an elegant cigar-case, with a small engraving of one of Raphael's loveliest Madonnas standing by it on one side, and a little alabaster copy of Thorwaldsen's Venus on the other — and only this connection for the three, that they were all beautiful. Thus, the mother of the Christian's God, and the mother of the heathen's love, were set up together, not in the compromising spirit of the old Romans, but in a light that made both holy. Karl's entire room, in a word, was a little Pantheon for all lovely deities; for his was the polytheism of beauty.

There was the least perceptible tremor in George Lang's voice, as, after looking about in silence for some time, he said, "Where could he have gone? The Eastern steamer went yesterday."

"He hasn't gone on that," replied Dixon, unhesitatingly.

"Where else could he have gone? He knows no one in this country."

"He may be at Captain Tambol's, up in Sonoma; but that is hardly possible, as you know," observed Amos, musing, as he in his turn looked around him; "and if he is not there, depend upon it something wrong has happened."

"The steamer went yesterday," Lang repeated, with some emphasis. "He must have gone on the steamer."

"His name," interposed Amos, "was not in the printed list, for I remember to have read that."

"But you know, Mr. Dixon," and George made an attempt to recover his usual equanimity, "but you know, Mr. Dixon, that hundreds leave on the steamer without having their names printed."

Amos pointed to Karl's guitar, valise, and toilet articles occupying their usual places in the room. "Why did he not take these, and why should he leave so suddenly, and why should he not bid us good-by? There is something wrong here, I tell you."

Lang's face now assumed an altogether new expression. All at once he felt that he hated Dixon. When he would give so much, if he could only say to his conscience, "Karl, my old friend, has gone on the steamer," why should this stupid fellow come in to convince other people to the contrary?

How much George Lang slept that night it would be hard to tell. He himself did not know the next morning.

Amos did not reach his little room on Clary Street till he had waited hours at the telegraph office for this dispatch : —

“SONOMA, 186—.

“MR. A. DIXON, *San Francisco* :

“Schmerling is not here.

L. J. TAMBOL.”

CHAPTER XV.

MR. DIXON MAKES A GOOD IMPRESSION.

WHAT time was left Amos after business hours, had been dedicated to the search after Schmerling ; but three days of such labor were spent fruitlessly. Karl had been gone, now, a week, and no clew could be found to his whereabouts.

This Monday afternoon it occurred to Mr. Dixon that he had business at the elegant house on Folsom Street. In fact, the same thought had been occurring to him for some time — indeed, ever since Karl's disappearance, and even before that event. His last view of the Clayton mansion, it is true, was not under the most favorable of auspices. The dropsical tendency of all things on that fatal night — the prevalence of water, even in the eyes of the afflicted Garr — was calculated to give too confused a back-ground to the picture. Amos may or may not have used this argument with himself. He certainly used a great many others ; and they all tended to the conclusion that he had business at the elegant house on Folsom Street, this very Monday afternoon.

Then, why, if he had so concluded, was he standing, irresolute, at the door, through which he expected to pass into the presence of Amelia ? That fluttering little monk, the heart, from his busy cloister, is always adding such strange scholia to the most irrefragable of conclu-

sions. These were written, now, only on the cheek of Amos; as you might say, in the red ink of his own blushes.

He was just a little vexed with the door-bell for ringing after he had pulled it; then he became very cool, and walked into the parlor, looking about as usual, only a little more sad. Here, Mrs. Clayton returned his bow, from an icy mountain-top of dignity, behind which she might have disappeared, like the mysterious figure in the moonlight, without astonishing Mr. Dixon in the least, so distant and so rarefied of any feeling was her air. Amelia extended her hand with a rainbow smile above it, and he took it, thinking of the sunshine of the pleasantest valleys; and then, with a second hopeful thought, of the cheery meads and terraces, on which, in his vision, she herself had stood beckoning to him. Miss Sophia Garr did not see fit to look at the visitor at all: for that lady was weeping.

"What!" said Mr. Dixon, and his face wore an extremely odd look, "you have not been crying ever since?"

"Yes, almost ever since," sobbed Miss Garr.

"Impossible!"

"Mr. Dixon, although this is a private affair, and I don't see fit ever to speak to you again, still I take the liberty of repeating to you that my eyes have not been entirely dry *ever since*." The two last words were emphasized hysterically.

"Well," remarked Amos, thoughtfully, "it was a horrid, dark, wet night."

"Then, you know the night, do you? of his disappearance — of his robbery — of his — (sob) (sob) — of his murder!" exclaimed the sorrow-stricken Sophia, in

crescendo horror — “Mr. Lang said you were the first to bring the unwelcome news. I thought, *then*, it looked — it looked — well! —” and drawing a long breath, and herself into a sublime attitude, Miss Garr, at that moment, looked a caricature statue of Suspicion, done in yellow clay, the customary “Liquid Pearl” having been rubbed from her face by the excited use of her handkerchief.

“Oh!” observed Mr. Dixon, looking away from Sophia, “I thought she was alluding to the rainy night of the Concert and Theatre. Really, Miss Clayton, I can not tell you how I have been grieved by the strange disappearance of Mr. Schmerling.”

“Mr. Lang says,” Amelia rejoined, “that he has sought his friend everywhere, and believes that he has gone back to New York on the steamer.”

“Yes,” interposed Mrs. Clayton, evidently doing the work for which she had hired her old friend from the State of Maine, “yes, and I have learned to place great confidence in Mr. Lang’s judgment. That little stock transaction that he undertook for me, you know, paid very handsomely. And now, as for that Dutchman —”

A tragic movement from the weeping Niobe of so many ravished hopes — who, by the way, had been the first to vest Karl with that offensive antonomasia.

“I beg pardon, Sophia, Mr. Schmerling, I mean — Mr. Schmerling, then, must have gone on the steamer.”

“It may be so,” said Amelia; “it may be some dreamy freak of his;” and she thought of the shadow-music, and of his preoccupied way of bidding her good-bye the afternoon on which he was last seen.

“I may say that I hope so,” observed Amos sadly; “I am afraid some worse misfortune may have happened.”

"I see how it is," began Miss Garr, indignantly. "You are not content with trampling on my affections, and utterly ruining my opera-cloak and Paris bonnet, and exposing me to the horriddest of tempests; but, no, you must come and insult me in my own house — or, I mean, in the house of my old friend from the State of Maine."

"What on earth have I done, Miss Garr?" demanded Amos in surprise.

"Have you not 'hoped so?'" hurled back the enraged maiden, with a dexterous upward turn of the nose. "We will see how people can be murdered under suspicious circumstances, and how other people can darkly hint at 'a worse misfortune that might have happened' — as if any one, Mr. Dixon, yes, any one dare think marrying me would be a worse misfortune than to be spirited away on the steamer, or foully murdered!"

It must be told, that here, very much out of her own rule, Amelia broke forth into the merriest of laughter — which sounded to Mr. Dixon, after the preceding storm, like the ringing of bells at sea. He was almost vexed at himself for laughing, too. He thought it drowned the music so. Even Mrs. Clayton was moved to a well-bred cachinnation.

Whereupon Miss Garr's face became nearer blue than yellow, with intensest anger. There are moments of excitement when words will not come fast. The tongue becomes overladen, and passion runs on in advance of that little sumpter beast. So now, the wronged Sophia began in what might be called an adagio of rage.

"I will not say what was between Mr. Schmerling and me; but-if-he-had-not-been spirited away — or murdered —" (Here her sharp eyes looked ineffable things at Amos — including a sense of family injuries — while

she repeated with clenched teeth) "yes, basely murdered." This latter word was evidently a strong weapon of attack, and she used it again, "I say basely murdered." In fact she used it so often that she had lost her connection; and to this day that annihilating sentence has not been completed.

For the short moment that her speech faltered, her trenchant eye went on, — right through Amos Dixon, through Amelia, on through Mrs. Clayton, herself, — for her wrath was now comprehensive. And yet this human *brochette* — for all the painful spigotting — seemed rather pleased than otherwise. A scandalous smile, even, was on the face of one or two of them, as Sophia turned them over and over, roasting them before this verbal fire:

"In the retirement of a princely estate in Sonoma" — Miss Garr's imagination always became gorgeous when the idea of marriage set off its Roman candles — "there, I hope, I would not have been forced to meet a man who was never welcome where I was, and never will be welcome where I am."

The lady paused long enough to turn her *brochette* of three, and to pierce Mr. Dixon with a forked glance, to see whether he was yet done. And strange to say, that "arch fiend" bore it very quietly.

"How dare you, sir," continued Miss Garr, figuratively, stirring the fire — "How dare you, sir, come into this house, after offering me the indignity of taking me home in the rain? — and ruining my millinery?"

Amos now put on an exceedingly queer look. It might have been of confusion, and, then, it might have been of tacit wisdom.

Whatever it was, it did not mollify the rage of the quondam instructress.

"I hope, sir, you will leave this house," she almost screamed, "and I hope, sir, you will never cross its threshold again."

Amos looked uneasily at his watch.

"Please to remain seated, Mr. Dixon," said Amelia, very quietly; "Miss Garr, this farce has been acted about far enough. It must be, by this time, becoming disagreeable to Mr. Dixon. You have offered the gentleman no inducement to make an apology for the mishap of the other evening. He has done nothing, that I know of, which should bring upon him an expulsion from this house; and," turning to Amos, who was looking again perturbedly at his watch, "and, Mr. Dixon, you will come to see *me*; will you not? You will be welcome, always."

The idea of bells again occurred to Amos. When Amelia stopped talking it seemed to him like the dying away of distant chimes.

The folds of Miss Clayton's dress, too, it suddenly struck Mr. Dixon, had never before posed themselves in such elegant grace. Amos, lost in this wilderness of mazy silk, was famishing of his own contemplation, when a gentle manna of words restored him to, at least, a half-consciousness.

"You are not offended, Mr. Dixon? You *will* come, will you not?"

"Most certainly!" exclaimed Amos, as he thought how he should like to be abused before Amelia every afternoon. This absurdity came into his head, no doubt, at the same time with the music, which was the tone and soul of that last "*Will you not?*"

Meantime, Sophia had appealed to Mrs. Clayton; but that lady was fearful of one of the defeats almost always dealt her in conflicts wherein her daughter marshaled

firmness, and love, and tenderness, all on the side of right. Mrs. Clayton contented herself, therefore, with the simple remark: "This house, Sophia, I must acknowledge, has become rather common of late."

Amos was just on the point of consulting his watch again, when the door-bell rang, and he suddenly changed his mind. That same queer look, which had come across his face several times this afternoon, was observable upon it now; and it became only the more intense, as the servant announced, "A package for Miss Garr."

"A package!" that lady exclaimed. "I have ordered no package. Bring it in here, please. It must be as much for all of you, as for me," and her voice was milder. Curiosity was the oil upon the waters of her wrath.

The package proved to be a large one. Out of it first came a band-box, and out of that a most elegant Paris bonnet; and, from several wrappings of immaculate white paper, came forth, like Venus from the foam of the sea, such a splendid opera-cloak as — Miss Garr had never owned before.

The expression of Sophia's face, at this moment, may be stated as zero divided by infinity. Nothing so blank and disagreeable can be found anywhere else, outside of algebra. She was looking at a card, bearing this legend: "*To Miss Sophia Garr, with compliments of A. Dixon.*"

"Well," said Miss Sophia Garr, drawing a long breath, "money seems plenty enough with you now, Mr. A. Dixon. I suppose you had none with you the night of the concert, or you would have taken a carriage."

"Oh! I had plenty with me, then," observed Amos carelessly; and he watched the impression the scene was making on Amelia.

“What, what, sir — what in the world, sir, did you mean by taking me through the wind and rain that night, and not taking a carriage, sir?”

Amos arose slowly, coughed, and answered deliberately: “I was taking a more expensive lesson in human nature. It is ended now. You may profit by it, too. Good afternoon, Miss Garr.”

Miss Garr did not offer to see Mr. Dixon out. This fellow had seen through her, and shown her up. There was something mingled with her anger and hatred that rendered her speechless.

As Amelia stood at the door, bidding the visitor good afternoon, Mrs. Clayton, herself, vouchsafed this complimentary observation: “Sophia, that stupid ass is no fool!”

Amos of course did not hear this; but he saw the pleased interest in the face that bowed to him from the closing door. Something had taken the place of pity, in the earnest, gray eyes that were to bend upon him, hereafter, in his dreams.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. ARCHIBALD BEANSON.

IN the two months succeeding the events of the last chapter, George Lang and his little man of confidence, Mr. Nelson Shallop, attended strictly to business.

This statement is made for the benefit of the future sage, who, tracing the design in history, shall come to dwell upon the annals of the Golden State. This statement may light him to the Bethlehem from which that mania went forth, besetting nearly half a million of people — may light him to the manger of the anti-Christ of stocks. Such men as George Lang were the worshipping Magi, and such restless eyes as Nelson Shallop's were their guiding stars. The early teachers of this grand heresy of gold were nurtured in the back offices of Montgomery Street. From these tents the neophytes went forth to a conquest more rapid than that of the Saracen; armed with the distempered glitter only of a metal a thousand times more powerful and more deadly than the steel of Damascus.

The broker and his clerk, then, attended to business. As Mrs. Clayton has herself hinted, Lang's dealings with that lady had been particularly prosperous. Other transactions of a speculative nature had been rewarded with greater success and with greater mutual confidence.

So it was not a matter of any great surprise when, early in the evening of the first December, George Lang

and another gentleman called at the door of the elegant house on Folsom Street, and asked for Mrs. Clayton.

"She has been abed all day," said the servant laconically.

"Take this card up to Mrs. Clayton," observed the broker, conducting his companion to a seat in the parlor, while he himself leaned his elbow carelessly on the mantle-piece, taking his stand on the hearth-rug, as upon his own confidence, and speaking from it as follows to the gentleman on the sofa, who was moreover a red-haired gentleman: "That card will cure her, Mr. Beanson."

"Ye — es!" emitted the red-haired gentleman on the sofa, with an indescribable something in his tone and manner suggestive of an air-gun.

And it was not long till the message came, that Mrs. Clayton would be down directly.

Now Amelia's mother was one of those invalids whose disease is, principally, that they do not know what is the matter with them — a nervous disorder, by the way, which is quite an epidemic with the ladies of some countries. An invitation to ride, or an unexpected visitor, is often the best medicine for these afflicted persons. At any rate, such a fascination for Mrs. Clayton had the man whom she had elected future son-in-law, that she made her appearance in about half the time it would have taken Miss Garr, if that prim maiden had been expecting the visitor for a month.

Advancing to meet her, the broker said, "This, Mrs. Clayton, is Mr. Beanson, the notary, who is now prepared to take the acknowledgment of the signatures. Will you be kind enough to send for Amelia?"

Mr. Beanson bowed a very old-looking head from a

very young-looking body ; a head that, besides its remarkable redness, presented the appearance of having grown prematurely grave in studying ways and means for the support of the body attached ; and a body that appeared to have become prematurely lank and scalene, in supporting so grave a head. As Mrs. Clayton, by a nod, consented to recognize that such a person could exist in her presence, Mr. Beanson bowing stiffly from an elevation of about six feet and two inches, said he was sure that he was very happy, and resumed his place on the sofa.

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Clayton, at last, having taken some time to discuss the question, and finally convincing herself that it was a human being and not a Chinese tower she saw before her. "Oh! this is the lawyer?"

"Yes," answered Lang, "this is the notary, Mrs. Clayton, the notary in whose presence the papers must be signed."

Mr. Beanson, somehow imagining he saw in Mrs. Clayton's question, or in Mrs. Clayton herself, the *ignis fatuus* of his first brief, occupied several moments in the delightful optical pursuit of looking at her. He felt called upon to answer so important a question himself.

"Yes, yes, madam, I am a lawyer, though rather young, as you see."

Mrs. Clayton, looking fortunately at his body and not his head, nodded assent, and graciously keeping up the conversation, inquired, "Much practice?"

"No, madam," answered the hopeful Beanson, "but I stand in perfect readiness to practice."

Poor fellow, he had been standing that way so long, that his head, as has been seen, had well-nigh reached its second childhood before his body had got fairly out of its first.

"Well," said the lady, "if you will excuse me now, I will go for Amelia."

The *ignis fatuus* first brief had disappeared with her behind the closing door; and Mr. Beanson was left to the dark, foggy moorlands of his customary thoughts. Mr. Lang, throwing himself carelessly into an easy chair, contemplated the notary in silence.

To correct any false impression that may have been made as to his appearance, it is no more than justice to state that Mr. Beanson was rather angular than awkward. There was, indeed, something so aggressive in his angularity that you forgot his awkwardness. He presented so many points to hang an angry glance upon, that the world in general could not help looking angrily at him, from a sense of fitness, thus so agreeably gratified. Mr. Beanson was not the first man on earth who has been the victim of his own personal ugliness. There was nothing bad about him; yet his life had been a failure.

Owing to the discrepancy between our only two authorities, namely, his face and his frame, it is utterly impossible to make any definite statement about Mr. Beanson's years. He might have been twenty, and he might have been of any age beyond that. The student of this particular branch of chronology was generally convinced by the authority he had consulted last. All that is known of the early history of this mysterious person is, that he had been elected Justice of the Peace up in one of the mountain towns, and if he had not resigned just as he did, according to the statement of his own impressions, he would certainly have starved. He had come down to San Francisco, for the express purpose of getting his first brief. By a great deal of eloquence he had pre-

vailed upon a painter to trust him to a notary's sign, and between testifying to other people's oaths and swearing his own at cheap restaurants, he managed to keep soul and body together; and, partially, to reconcile both to that ponderous anachronism, his head. During the long two years of his sojourn in the city, hope had more than once mingled with the five-cent dishes of his banquets, and seasoned them; but that was the only material benefit he had as yet derived from his first brief.

Mrs. Clayton returning with Amelia, Mr. Beanson executed another polyhedral bow and addressed himself to the business at hand.

In the estimation of George Lang, it seems, there were two tides leading to the Clayton fortune; and he stood prepared to take either or both of them at the flood. The smoother one brought Amelia to his side; the other, more ruffled by the underlying rocks of the law, bore Amelia and her mother both to the quicksands at his feet.

The lawyer who had drafted the late Mr. Clayton's will, and had been the widow's man of business during Amelia's minority, had just returned to the Atlantic States, there to remain. The broker was now succeeding to the vacant place; and Amelia having passed the legal age of eighteen, it was, of course, necessary that separate papers should be made out empowering the agent to act for mother and daughter. At Lang's request, the paper for Mrs. Clayton's signature was the one first produced. At Lang's request, also, this paper was elaborately explained by the notary. It was simply a special power of attorney appointing Mr. Lang to collect and sue for rents, etc., for Mrs. Clayton; and that lady's signature

was duly acknowledged. Coming to the document intended for Amelia to sign, the aggressive Mr. Beanson was proceeding to explain it to her, in a similar manner, when Lang interposed with assumed carelessness: "Miss Clayton, I hope, by this time understands what she is about to do. Pray, spare her if you can."

"Then, it has been sufficiently explained already?" demanded the notary.

"Yes, yes; it would be doing no great compliment to Miss Clayton's intelligence to go over the whole matter again."

Mr. Beanson turned to Amelia: "Do you fully understand the great power conferred upon your agent by this paper?"

"I think I do," was the young lady's reply.

"Certainly. Sign, my child," interposed Mrs. Clayton. "Don't have this man, Mr. Beans— Mr. Beanson," and here she pointed in haughty defiance at a salient angle in the human catapult before her, "don't have this man go over all that horrid explanation again. It's so frightful on the nerves. Sign, my child."

And Amelia's signature to the document was also duly acknowledged.

Laying down the pen, she had caught Lang's eye riveted eagerly upon her face. The next moment, and for several succeeding moments, Lang's gaze was riveted as eagerly upon the carpet. "Why *will* he never meet my look?" she asked herself; for this, as will be remembered, was not the first stadium in the long retreat of the black dishonesty of his eyes before the gray purity of hers.

The unmistakable spring of this utter confidence in

George Lang seemed to Mr. Beanson as plain as the nose on his face — and that, by the way, was very plain indeed and very long ; for when that gifted notary was dismissed, he slyly remarked how eagerly Mrs. Clayton urged the handsome broker to remain and pass the evening. “Mighty fine girl, though,” he thought as he descended the steps, “I would not mind marrying her, myself, — but then, that Lang has got the start of me.”

Mr. Beanson, it may here be parenthetically stated, was one of those persons who had been taught at school that he was in danger at any time of being called to the presidency. So that, when he announced himself in perfect readiness to practice law, he would have been guilty of no injustice to his schoolmaster, or indeed to his own feelings, if he had furthermore announced that he stood in perfect readiness to be elected president of the United States. He was not aware how much his own sublime ruggedness had stood between him and his first brief, let alone the Chief Magistracy. Far from it. Mr. Beanson, on the contrary, had devoted much time to the study of diplomacy ; for, he reasoned with himself, with some justice, too, that at first he might have to fill the office of Secretary of State, as a demonstration of his willingness to assume the more responsible and arduous position. This, indirectly, was how he came to flatter himself that if there was any one thing in which he was calculated to excel himself, that one thing was diplomacy. And Mr. Beanson did not allow himself to be dismissed from the Clayton mansion, without leaving behind him some evidence of his long and successful training in that school of exalted deceit.

For, the very next day, Miss Sophia Garr astonished the whole house by finding in her own new silver card-

case, which she had left on the parlor table, a very cheap and cadaverous-looking piece of pasteboard, on which she read aloud and in amazement the following plenipotentiary dispatch: —

ARCHIBALD BEANSON,

Attorney at Law and Notary Public.

OFFICE NO. 133½ MONTGOMERY BLOCK.

 *Ascend The Last Pair of Stairs.*

So it was a chuckle, and not a stumble, as Mrs. Clayton had believed, that, in taking his departure, had agitated the red-headed diplomat, in pursuit of his first brief and that other trivial matter, the presidency.

In truth, however, Mrs. Clayton was not then the proper person for so minute a decision as that between a chuckle and a stumble of Mr. Beanson's. Apart from the keen optics and knowledge of ancient history required in judgment on a subject so remote and antediluvian as anything connected with the head of Mr. Beanson, she was too anxious to detain the broker and to get rid of the repulsive functionary.

The chuckle, therefore, of the disappearing notary, having glided on into an open grin, had broken only three times on the shallows of laughter, when Mrs. Clayton returned to the parlor. The chuckle, commencing again and taking Mr. Beanson cheerily around the second corner, had just reached the broad cataract of a deep haw-haw, when Mrs. Clayton suddenly remem-

bered that she was really too sick to sit up and must go right back to bed again. Vanishing, therefore, behind the closing door, and a look, rather knowing than feeble, the considerate parent left Amelia Clayton alone with George Lang.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SMOOTHER TIDE.

"You have heard nothing yet from Mr. Schmerling?" demanded Amelia, of the Stock and Money Broker, as her mother's footsteps died away on the stairs.

"Absolutely nothing. He can not be in California. I have sought him so anxiously, and — so thoroughly."

"How sad!"

The momentary look of Lang would have said in words, "What is the secret of her interest in *him*?" The succeeding brightness on his face would have added, "Ah! I can cure her of it! Why didn't I think of it before?"

Amelia looked musingly away from the broker. She was thinking again of the afternoon when she had last seen Karl. Lang sat gazing on her face as on the tablet where he was to write the story he was framing.

"To tell you the truth, Miss Clayton, I have long since made up my mind as to where my old friend has gone."

"Indeed?" and Amelia, turning her head slightly, continued the inquiry with her eyes.

"Mr. Schmerling," the broker went on, looking from one article of furniture to the other, and ending with an abstruse study of the back of the chair in which the young lady sat, "Mr. Schmerling, I suppose, has never, before you, alluded to his affianced?"

"Never."

"Well, then, he has returned to Germany to bring her back a bride and a surprise."

Amelia smiled incredulously. "Why should he leave everybody and every thing so suddenly — even his traveling valise, as Mr. Dixon says."

"Mr. Dixon! That Dixon is a —"

"Gentleman, Mr. Lang."

"Just as I was going to say — a gentleman who is more liable to be mistaken in this matter, than I am who have known Karl for years." Lang's eye here regained the back of Amelia's chair, from which it had been temporarily jarred away, and his temper and his words became smoother. "You see how delicate Karl has been about mentioning the red-cheeked object of his choice. The mystery of his departure would indeed have been utterly inexplicable, had it been any one else but that same dear old Karl. He is such a queer fellow!"

"How, by the way, did you, Mr. Lang, come to know of the engagement?" Then followed the woman's question: "Are you sure she is pretty? How did you know she is red-cheeked?"

"I am almost sure he never mentioned his engagement or his lady to any one but me, and he would not have done that had I not read it in his crystalline nature. I surprised him one day in the queerest manner possible, and he owned everything, and that," said Lang, with a bow and a smile, "is the way I learned she was pretty and had red cheeks."

After a slight pause Amelia began: "Women are told every day of their inordinate curiosity. It is hardly necessary; for we know we have it, and with an apology for mine, now, would it be wrong in me to ask how you

made Mr. Schmerling own everything? — in short, what that ‘queerest manner possible’ was?”

The broker’s eyes crept away from the back of her chair, and made a stealthy pilgrimage to her face. They bent before the two shrines of light there, and fled back whence they came. “It was,” he answered with just the least nervousness, “it was by means of an old Italian author.”

“An old Italian author?”

“Yes, Boccaccio — an old fellow, by the way, whom I almost always find serviceable in affairs of the heart. Much of modern literature is founded on him. He was, in fact, the Herodotus of heart-history. Even that other great pioneer in such matters, Shakespeare, himself, has borrowed from him.”

“Really,” said Amelia, becoming interested, “I have just barely heard of Boccaccio, so it may be excusable if I do not understand you.”

“Oh! it is one of his stories that always helps me out.”

“And you are kindly going to relate it now?”

“To tell the truth, the story is insipid enough. Its merit is in its adaptability. La Fontaine, for instance, has used it in his *Magnifique*, if I remember; and old Ben Jonson in one of his comedies. I am not good authority, however; I used to read such things a long time ago when I was more scholarly, less absorbed in business, and, in short (with a deprecatory smile), more worthy of your companionship.”

At this last word, Amelia fell to musing again. “Why,” she asked of herself, “do I always feel so constrained in his presence? That is the way people in novels feel when they are in love. And why will he never look me

square in the face? Is there anything so very wicked in *my* eye?" Then, recollecting herself, she said, "Indeed, Mr. Lang, I should like to hear so famous a story."

"You would?" and he moved his seat nearer to hers, while his eyes made another circuit of the room and rested on the same spot on the back of her chair. "Well, then," he began, "the Knight Ricciardo, after long desiring, and at the sacrifice of a great prize, obtained a short interview with the lady whom he loved as rarely men can love. He spoke to her then as he had never, except with his eyes, had a chance to speak to her before."

"With his eyes?"

"No, in words, and in words something like these: 'I make no doubt, dear lady, that you have perceived how much I am your slave. You have known that I loved you, but you cannot know, and I can not tell how long and ardently. Without you I am not peer to my own misery; bearing your favor to the fray, I could ride and tilt against a world. Be assured that you can call nothing your own so much as me and mine. Give me, then, one inestimable boon in return. May I hope?'"

Lang paused. Amelia became agitated and confused. She was demanding of herself what this possibly could have to do with Schmerling. Seeing that Lang did not proceed, she asked:—

"And what did the lady say?"

"Nothing — only trembled."

"And the gentleman?"

"He paused for an answer."

Amelia strove to repress a strange dizziness which she felt coming over her — a dizziness akin to that which one sometimes feels on the brink of a precipice, and

which brings with it that wild temptation to throw one's self over.

Lang at last resumed his story. "The Knight Ricciardo, seeing that the lady spoke not, and being still hopeful, thus made answer for her: 'I have most assuredly, Sir Knight, been long a witness of the great love you bear me; and am now further convinced of it by your words. *I know the will of my mother.* I think I can trust my heart. Such devotion as yours should have its requital — in fact, compels its own requital. Love grows upon such a soil. We will await the blossoming. You may hope.'"

Amelia's strange dizziness had increased at the words "I know the will of my mother." She had then attempted to speak, but had failed. She had heard nothing beyond those words, "I know the will of my mother."

"You do not ask," said Lang, "whether the lady was pleased."

"Well," sighed Amelia, listlessly, "was the lady pleased?"

"*Was* she pleased! Rather *is* she pleased?" insinuated Lang, lowering his voice as his face became set with a determined look. "*Is* she pleased? Are *you* pleased?" Then, attempting to take her hand, "O dear Amelia!"

"Oh! dear, Amelia!" echoed a voice, so sudden and so sharp that it seemed to be all around them.

Lang's hand, on the way to the young lady's, was quickly arrested and went to his own ear, in the attitude of listening.

In the succeeding stillness, he convinced himself that he was the dupe of imagination.

"Yes," he resumed, at last, "I am Ricciardo. Have I

told your story as faithfully as I have my own? May I, O Amelia" —

"O Amelia!" echoed the same sharp voice.

Another startled pause.

"Amelia, where are you?"

"Where am I, where am I?" now echoed the young lady herself, still listlessly.

"Amelia, have you seen my thimble?"

The door leading to the sitting-room had suddenly opened, and disclosed Miss Sophia Garr anxiously seeking that domestic implement. "O dear me! I beg your pardon, Mr. Lang. Amelia, you must have observed that I am always losing my thimble!"

Amelia arose to her feet, and, pressing her hands to her temples, spoke more hurriedly than her faithful instructress had ever heard her speak before: "What has come over me? My head aches dreadfully. Miss Garr, you will be kind enough to entertain Mr. Lang, who, I hope, will excuse me for the remainder of the evening. I am really quite ill now. I shall be stronger, yes, stronger, Mr. Lang, when I see you again. Good night."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW SOPHIA EARNS HER SALARY.

MISS GARR did not exactly understand the situation ; but leaned to the impression that her own marshalship had left her master of the field. At least, she was now alone with Mr. Lang, and she proposed to take advantage of the occasion.

The broker himself, as may be supposed, was much enraged at the person who had been guilty of so untimely an interruption. Amelia would have been his in the next moment. Had she not said as much? Was she not going to be stronger next time? He felt the more confident of this since it confirmed an old opinion of his — which, to tell the truth, found no little warrant in a long course of brilliant successes — that no woman could withstand him. Yet it was, at worst, only a case of certain hope deferred. Miss Garr was a power in the house of Clayton, and he could not afford to quarrel with her just now. Mr. Lang, therefore, intrenched his anger behind one of his most impermeable smiles, as Miss Sophia, the peerless Amazon of small-talk, thus laid siege : —

“What is it that made Amelia so red in the face? Oh! you naughty fellow, you have been saying something to her!”

“I was merely telling her a story from Boccaccio.”

“Boccaccio! Why, that is such a bad book. It was expurgated from our seminary in the State of Maine!

I — I am really," simpered that moral lady, "I am really glad I was not here. I won't hear it, so you needn't tell it to me — unless you have nothing else to tell me!"

The ground for this familiarity on the part of Miss Garr will be best seen, through the present state of Miss Garr's affections — which latter were, of course, only a sort of pleasant synecdoche for her mining speculations. In her bereavement nothing had kept Sophia from going into mourning for the missing Karl but — the expense. She had come to congratulate herself that she had not been guilty of this piece of extravagance. Her conscience, indeed, smote her for the weeks she had wasted in profitless grief. This it will be remembered, was not the first time, in her quest for the hundred-and-fifty-pound ingot, that the hydraulic process had been attended with disastrous results: so she had now shut off her tears, and gone higher up the mountain into the quartz rock. In other words, and still figurative, she had kindled her "prospecting" camp fire before George Lang himself.

The greatest minds have been more or less subject to monomania. The *Daimon* of Socrates himself was either a monstrous development of conscience, or a hallucination brought about by the want of proper food; and for both or either of which, he might, for aught we know, have been indebted to Xantippe, his termagant wife. Like Socrates and Mahomet, Miss Sophia Garr was gifted with a mania. She had a monstrous belief in the marriageability of men; and it grew with defeat. There had been a time in her experience, when the beleaguering of George Lang, under the present circumstances, would have appeared eminently ridiculous; but

disappointment seems to be the stuff that mania is made of. Besides, who of us is above flattery?

The success which had attended the present mining venture of Miss Garr may be gleaned from the outcroppings of Mr. Lang's conversation — which the foregoing paragraphs have so ill-manneredly interrupted:

"Sophia, my girl, what shall I tell you?" and his fortified smile ran a bastion the whole length and breadth of his face.

"Tell me anything but that horrid story, or you will send me out of the room blushing, too."

"I could not think, then, of bringing such a catastrophe upon myself. We will talk about something else. I suppose you have heard of Mrs. Leadbetter's luck in buying stock?"

"Mrs. Leadbetter," said Miss Garr, "is an extraordinary — a model woman: she looks so well in black. It is said that she is waiting patiently for her husband to die, so she can dress in full mourning; but, really," continued Sophia, with a curious sigh, "Mrs. Clayton talks so much about stocks of late, that I would much rather hear the story than any more about mines — speaking of two evils, you know."

"I could tell you a more modern one, Sophia, my girl."

"Oh! I see; you insist on telling the same shocking thing from Boccaccio, under another name. Why will you, now?"

"The more modern story, Sophia," Lang went on, now sure of allaying her unpleasant curiosity, "is of a young man, who, going to woo the mistress of a castle, fell in love with her companion."

"O you cruel George! How can you men so trifle with our poor feelings? You know it is all we have."

Miss Garr was here guilty of an injustice to herself. Leagued with her mania, she also had, beside her poor feelings, the talent (as you have seen) of mingling and confounding what she wanted to be, with what she believed would be — the same inestimable talent that enables some politicians to wager their all on their own candidate, without ever considering the chances of his being elected. A husband was Miss Garr's candidate, and the practice of long, busy years had made her only the more eager to stake her all of hope and confidence and belief, as in the present instance, on the slightest chance of an election.

Mr. Lang offered no rejoinder to Miss Garr's last speech. He dare not speak; he dare not even smile — for fear of laughing outright.

"Our poor feelings, George" — the lady continued, playing a minor accompaniment to the music of her voice by applying her handkerchief alternately to the stops of her nose and eyes — "our poor feelings, they are all we have, and — and — I did not know I had so much of *them* till now; but George, did that modern young man marry the mistress of the castle — or — or her comp — companion?"

"He was at a loss what to do. He was afraid that he had compromised himself with the lady he had first wooed."

"I should think the companion would have felt awfully."

"You do not understand me," returned Lang, still in great peril of an unseemly laugh. "The young man of the story was afraid that he had so compromised himself

with the daughter of the castle, as to have proved himself ungrateful to the lady of his maturer choice."

"But his fears must have been entirely groundless!"

"Then, Sophia, my girl, we need not any longer talk in allegory."

"Not at all, dear George."

"You know my secret, now."

"And you know mine, dear George."

"And we will keep them to ourselves."

"Yes, yes, as long as you may think it prudent, dear George."

"You will do one thing more for me, Sophia, my girl?" insinuated Lang, as he arose to depart and took her by the hand.

"Yes, anything, anything, dearest George."

"Well, then, be sure to tell me everything that Amelia says about all the events of this evening; from the business transactions, to the story from Boccaccio."

"Certainly, certainly; but dearest George, haven't you forgotten something?"

Lang stopped suddenly. His hand, which he had already extended toward the door, went quickly to the breast pocket of his coat. Feeling the papers all there, he said, opening the door, "No, I think not."

"Oh! yes, you have."

"What is it, then?"

"Why, to kiss me good-night."

This was too much, thought Lang, as he looked around uneasily: "I dare not, Sophia, somebody will see us."

"Come in, then, and shut the door."

"Some one will hear us, on the inside."

"We can go back into the parlor."

"Aren't you afraid of Mrs. Clayton there?"

"Not a bit of it, dearest George."

"We might as well risk it here, then — who cares?"

And George Lang departed, a sadder, and a wiser, and a bekissed man.

CHAPTER XIX.

AMOS DIXON RECEIVES A THUNDERBOLT.

NOT many days had elapsed when George Lang and the astute Mr. Beanson had another interview with Mrs. Clayton. A full power of attorney was this time signed and acknowledged. Amelia's presence was not required.

Mr. Lang left his compliments for her and would call again soon.

Mrs. Clayton was highly impressed by the condescension with which so busy a man as the prosperous broker had undertaken the additional burden of her affairs; and Mrs. Clayton could attribute it to nothing but the belief, in which she had also taken heavy shares, that he was at no distant day to be a very important member of her own family. The great stock excitement, then just beginning, might too have had its influence. Whatsoever the cause, the result was that Lang could now sell any and all of her real estate. He could at any moment take advantage, for Mrs. Clayton, of any profitable speculation that might come in his way.

Amos Dixon, meantime, had been more than once at the elegant house on Folsom Street. He had weighed Amelia's friendly invitation well, and had gone as often as he dared — even oftener than he dared, he thought. For when he came to look back over the last two months, he could remember instances, in which, he believed, he had positively gone against his own will. Yet

always meeting the same kindly reception, he could not see that he had made any progress. The mountain between Amelia and himself seemed just as steep, and just as rugged, and just as far off. The constant mention of George Lang's name, in connection with hers, had added an undefined hopelessness to his longing, making it more silent, while it made it more profound. The torrent had subsided into a deep pool, in which he could not see himself, but others could see him; for he stood in the slanting light of his own unworthiness.

There was observable the least tinge of thoughtfulness in the face of Amos — a settling of the lines there, that seemed to push more of the soul out.

Wrinkle after wrinkle had disappeared from his clothes — a fact which did not escape his employer, Mr. Andrew Gloverson. "Dixon, old fellow," said that portly gentleman, one afternoon, "Dixon, old fellow, you are getting high-toned!"

"Yes," replied Amos meekly, "I told you, you were pushing me forward too fast."

"What do you mean, Dixon?"

"Why, I am afraid I do not take the interest in your business that I ought to take."

"O you be d——d, Dixon; you suit me. Wait till I complain. I said you would fit this place. Am I a man to go back on my own judgment, say? You know it was my judgment that saved your life, when you were sick last summer."

"I know, Mr. Gloverson, that I owe everything to your kindness. And I thought, may be, that you ought to complain, whether you did or not."

"Dixon," said Mr. Gloverson, and then suddenly paused, looking at his cashier from head to foot, consider-

ing what to say, "Dixon," he repeated, and paused again. This time a flush spread over the face of the chubby merchant which was continued in the watering of his eyes. "Dixon, sir, you be d——d!" And Mr. Gloverson turned silently on his heel, and hobbled out of the building.

It was only the evening after this forcible argumentation, that Mr. Dixon, having made a careful toilet, again called on Folsom Street.

After mature study, Miss Garr had concluded to recognize Amos, but in a kind of iceberg manner, crushing him while she froze him. When, therefore, he was shown into the parlor, Sophia bowed stiffly, as Amelia arose and graciously extended her hand. In the Gulf Stream of pleasant talk which succeeded, and into which Miss Garr had necessarily drifted, with all her polar snows about her, she did not melt one tittle. By a dexterous turn she brought Lang's name into the conversation, and it fell on two of the company like an Arctic wind on the Bermudas.

Amos saw the impression it had made on Amelia, and without knowing it, sighed. *Now* he knew, as his fears had long told him, that the attractive broker was something besides the business agent of the family. It would be horrible to have any more definite information; to know that his own visits were too frequent; or that his presence was ungrateful. Yet, he felt sure now, that this knowledge must some day come. Yes, it must come; but then, why would it be so horrible, after all? Could he not love her secretly and silently, as he always had, even if she were another's? On mature consideration he thought this would be inconvenient. He would rather

not. Finally he broke the prevailing silence, continuing his musings aloud : "After all, one cannot help envying Mr. Lang his success."

"In business?" demanded Miss Garr, determined to be more flattered still, even by her worthless enemy.

"No, not in business," replied Amos very quietly.

Somehow, Amelia was studying the carpet.

"Well," volunteered Miss Sophia, with the characteristic long breath, with which she was in the habit of putting her truths in italics, "I am thankful for one thing. *I* am not of a jealous disposition. I might have an understanding with George — I mean Mr. Lang, but it is probable I have not. At any rate I can keep a secret. And I believe I will go. I may have an engagement with Mr. Lang this evening, and the time may be up now; but I believe I will go. At least *I* am not of a jealous disposition."

These were the scoriæ of Sophia's wrongs. The eruption of the ice volcano had ceased; and yet there were more light and warmth in the parlor where Amos sat alone with Amelia.

It was some time before either of them spoke; but it seemed to Mr. Dixon, afterwards, that he had heard and said more in that minute interval than he should ever hear or say again. At least, when he attempted to sustain his part of the conversation, which Amelia had commenced, he found himself borne more and more from the pleasant tropics of the preceding silence.

"You see I humor her eccentricities for my mother's sake."

"Ah! whose eccentricities, Miss Clayton?"

"Miss Garr's," replied Amelia, noticing the abstraction of Amos. They had been speaking of Sophia for several moments past.

"Yes, I beg your pardon, Miss Clayton."

"But there is, or was, one thing I could not humor," continued Amelia, "and that was her French, addressed confidentially to me in company. I believe that is thoroughly stopped now."

Amos was still thoughtful. He was wondering how it was that, away from Miss Clayton, he could think of so many things he was going to say to her — which must be eloquent, because they were so true; and how it was that, approaching her, especially of late, was like walking toward the sunset. The nearer he came, the farther off seemed his beautiful things on the horizon of his thought. He had now followed them into a still twilight — a sort of pleasant border-land of silence.

"But, by the way," Amelia went on, "whom do you think Miss Garr proposes to marry now?"

This sentence thrown out carelessly to float the conversation, was not finished before Miss Clayton was sorry she had not chosen some other one.

"It is easier to pity the person in advance than guess," returned Amos, endeavoring to emerge from his abstraction. "Who is it, pray?"

"I believe it is really Mr. Lang."

"Then," said Amos, "she must be going to some party in the neighborhood, may be at Mrs. Leadbetter's, where she expects to meet him. Do you think she had an engagement with him to that effect?"

"I could not, Mr. Dixon, possibly tell."

"And yet — and yet, I should think you would be anxious to know."

"Oh! she has not gone far."

"I was not thinking so much of Miss Garr as — as of" —

A slight knock was heard at the parlor door, which opening immediately after, the servant announced —

“Mr. Lang.”

That gentleman advanced briskly, and rather audaciously, under cover only of the most defensive of smiles. Having saluted Amelia, he turned to Amos. “How do you do, Dixon? Ah! the bee and the floweret; but I have caught you at it this time.”

This familiarity was appalling to Amos. “Well — yes,” he said, and could get no further; for he was overcome anew by the confident air with which Lang drew his chair nearer to Amelia’s than his own had ever been.

“How it blooms! — though it *is* evening,” the broker rattled on, as he looked toward Amelia. Turning again to Amos: “’Twas so appropriate; let me repeat: the bee and the floweret.”

“Well, yes,” again remarked Mr. Dixon, answering a certain tone in Lang’s voice, “but I did not mean to rob you of your honey.”

“Or to sting me either, Mr. Lang, I venture to say,” added Amelia.

Amos arose to his feet and walked unsteadily toward the door.

Amelia glanced a look of inquiry from Dixon to Lang. There was a light in the broker’s eyes that she had never seen there before — or were they light at all, those pulsations of increasing blackness? She could count his heart-beats in his eyes. Springing to her feet, she exclaimed, “Stop, Mr. Dixon, what — what can be the matter?”

Great shocks take away speech. The look that Amos turned toward her was pitiful.

“Mr. Dixon,” and Amelia coming nearer laid her hand

gently on his arm, "are you ill? What has come over you?"

Amos leaning himself against the door recovered his breath.

"What has come over you, Mr. Dixon?" asked Amelia again.

"Something that — that had to come sometime. Good-by. May — may God bless you." And Amos walked firmly out of the house.

Amelia, confused by what she did not understand, because she had not had time to reflect, sank on a sofa; and George Lang, elated by the foregoing scene, and now all confidence, took his place by her side.

CHAPTER XX.

FURTHER ADVENTURES OF MR. A. DIXON.

It was a powerful exertion of will which sustained Amos, as he left the elegant house. He did not consider the injustice done Amelia, in thinking that she would give him such a dismissal, at such a time. He did not consider that what he worshipped in her was just what would make her incapable of an act so ungenerous. He did not consider anything, but that his apprehensions had been realized. He could not even remember the words of his sentence; he only believed that it was just.

Half the lover quarrels of this earth spring from the jealous misinterpretation of a word, or a look. Long, weary exiles of the heart have been pronounced in a little spiteful moment of silence. But Amos Dixon knew nothing of this. He felt that he did not deserve the paradise he was leaving; and left it, looking back upon the flaming sword, without anger.

He walked, sometimes fast, sometimes slow, caring not whither, so that he went in the one direction of the will which had sustained him, and which bore him away from the place where his doom had been pronounced.

It was yet early evening. Amos had wandered about thus listlessly for over half an hour, when his attention was arrested by a strain of music. There was something in it that made him pause for a moment, and consider

where he was. He found himself on Kearny Street, between Post and Sutter, and had not done wondering how he came there when the music ceased. In the state Amos was then in, the sound seemed to have issued from the air about him. He could not think where it came from.

He walked on a block or two up Kearny Street, asking himself continually why this music should have stopped him. Suddenly the same strain connected itself in his mind with the bird song he had heard on the lawn in front of the elegant house on Folsom Street; and both, as suddenly, with the first evening he had spent in the company of Amelia. Why should this music sound so familiar when he was sure it was none of the popular melodies of the day?

Amos turned around and retraced his steps, glad to have something to lift his thoughts from the one painful theme. He nursed his curiosity. Walking with his head down, Mr. Dixon had again passed Sutter Street, before he looked up.

Then he went no farther.

He looked up because he heard a voice that thrilled him all over. It was Amelia's; and she was standing with George Lang, not six steps from him. This was to Amos almost the shock of the parlor over again. But they did not see him. Their faces were turned the other way, and both seemed listening intently.

This is what Amos heard Amelia say:

"I am sure it was the 'Song of Friendship!'"

As soon as he could, Amos wheeled about again, and, turning the corner of Sutter Street, fled as if pursued. He may have had little of the pride that lovers feel, but not for worlds would he have had Amelia think he was

following her. At that time, George Lang did not occupy much space in the mind of the fugitive. It was afterwards that Dixon felt his old dislike for the broker increasing; and that he would be annihilated before he would stir a step out of his way for George Lang.

Amos slackened his pace at Montgomery Street, and threaded his way thoughtfully up that thoroughfare. Now that Amelia was lost to him, he dwelt with a tender melancholy upon every little remembered act of kindness he had received at her hands. The sun seems larger as it sinks into the sea. He thought, as he walked along, how often Amelia had come to his rescue. The first evening on which he had met her, and now on the very last, her voice had explained away an embarrassment. Had it not just cleared up the mystery of that music? To be sure it was the "Song of Friendship" — the song that Karl had sung. Thus, to Amos his meeting and parting with Amelia were strangely connected by this melody, and the sadder music of her voice.

Then he began to think of Karl, and wondered who could be playing his music. With the idea of Karl, came the more confused one of his aquatic theory, about the ocean and misery. "I am truly miserable," sighed Amos, "and I will once more take to water."

So he toiled up Telegraph Hill again, thinking of the ghost, or, more probably, the illusion he had seen there, and wondering, too, how it was that nothing could happen to him of late without having some connection with Amelia. Making the ascent slowly, and stopping every now and then to breathe, he observed the moon rising out of the haze that covered the opposite mountains. "It was just sinking into the waters, as I left here before," thought Amos, "what if there were some hope for me behind it?"

Just as he had reached the identical spot from which the figure had seemed to disappear, on that other occasion, a crash, as of subterranean thunder, shook the crag beneath his feet. No earthquake — and he had felt many during his sojourn on the Pacific coast — had ever so startled Amos. His nerves had never been so well prepared for a shock. The sound had leaped from rock to rock, and spent its short boisterous life in the hollows of the distant hills, before he had calmed himself with the assurance that it was nothing but the gun of the Oregon steamer, then due.

It flashed upon him immediately after, that a steamer had been coming in, the night he had seen the figure on this same cliff. What if the cannon were the trumpet that called up this shape? But then ghosts were all nonsense. What would Mr. Gloverson say to a belief in them? And Amos shuddered; for he was framing to himself the sweeping allocution of his employer's infallible judgment against all manner of disembodied spirits. No; the cannon could be heard over in Lone Mountain cemetery, but then a cannon cannot call up ghosts.

With this thought, Amos turned his face toward the land, and the white grave-stones of Lone Mountain seemed to be coming nearer, as the moon, rising higher and higher, began to pave with silver the silent streets of the city of the dead. He heard the coming steamer, and was going to revert his attention to the bay below, when his eye was caught by something that approached through the shadow of the cliff. As it emerged slowly into the moonlight, he recognized the shape — the same that had beckoned to him.

This was too much for his credulity. Amos believed

that he was dreaming, and would wake up in the morning, in his own little room, to shake off, as he had done more than once, the nightmare of this illusion. In this belief he stood and calmly watched it coming nearer and nearer, and apparently straight towards him, — the figure of a woman, clad in the same mysterious gray, with a cloak of like material, thrown over the head and shoulders, something as the Italian painters represent the *Mater Dolorosa*.

Thus noiselessly she came. Amos held his breath; for her dishevelled hair of perfect whiteness, streaming from under the covering of her head, almost touched him as she passed. But she did not notice him, in the least. Her eyes were bent straight ahead of her, and seemed to diffuse a wild light over what little of her face was visible.

Pausing a few paces from him, and leaning one hand upon a projecting rock, with the other she caught up the loose folds of her cloak, and commenced waving at the steamer passing below.

There she stood as long as the steamer was in sight. The vigor seemed to go from her arm as gradually as the object she was waving at disappeared. Then, heaving a deep sigh, she turned and descended as she had come; and was soon lost to view in the shadows of the cliffs.

Amos, in the interval, had had time to convince himself that he was really awake, and at least a good mile from his little room on Clary Street. This conviction was accompanied with an undefined feeling, which he dared not, to himself, call gladness, because, even at the distance at which he saw it, there was something so sad in the rapt eagerness of that face, as it turned away toward the land. This, too, it was that restrained him from

following the vanishing figure. He would not pry into her misery, yet why should it lessen his own?

Besides, why did all seem the repetition of what he had seen and done and felt before? Why did the whole scene, although he was awake, come back upon him like the hazy landscape of an oft-repeated dream; with just one abyss on the brink of which his recollection paused; with the known on this side, and the unknown beyond; and the chasm, dark, impassable, still between?

As he stood alone in the light of the moon, which now shone out in a clear sky, this undefined feeling grew stronger upon Amos. It was, indeed, peculiar, — something like what one feels when a dear friend, who has spent long years in suffering, dies at last. It is not the sunlight of joy, or the night of sorrow, but a sort of mellow moonlight that borrows from both.

So Amos turned his steps homeward, feeling — and he could not tell why — glad that it was no dream.

CHAPTER XXI.

POP!

AMELIA had not been long in discovering why Amos had left the parlor and the house so strangely. It had been necessary only to calm herself enough to thread her way back through the conversation that had immediately preceded. She had not merely discovered; she had explored: for in no other way could Mr. Dixon have bared his heart to her so entirely. Given the effect, and there is probably no one of her sex who would not, very soon, have come to the cause — by a process which is called *a posteriori* with men, and which is chain lightning with women.

Amelia now took time to notice George Lang, who, from his end of the sofa, was contemplating her with some of the pleased confidence with which he was wont to regard her mother. This did not escape her; and, what is rather odd, helped to restore her to perfect equanimity. She arose quietly from his side, and seated herself on a chair by the window.

While Lang mused on the fitfulness of women, and the advantage of understanding them so thoroughly, Amelia contemplated the closely-drawn curtains. It must have been an unconscious impulse, for she certainly did not think she could trace, through them and the early starlight, the retreating figure of Amos. "What," said she, "could have made him misunderstand me so?"

"His intellects," responded the broker, with an easy sneer, "his intellects which are" —

Here the current of Lang's talk struck a hidden rock. Amelia suddenly drew herself up and turned upon him in that grand way that some spirited girls have. It must be left to the memory of those who have witnessed the like of it. Its portrayal belongs to another branch of art — to the chisel, rather than the pen. There are moments of transfiguration when the divinity of womanhood is manifest, and she becomes like some antique, sculptured Psyche, in her heroic grandeur, larger than the life.

But was this a trivial matter for so much grandeur? What is the measure of indignation? The ocean, to which, in the powerful silence preserved about its own pearls, something in Amelia's nature has already been compared — the sublime sea that tosses navies in its palm, and keeps the earth in balance — spends ages, likewise, in rounding a pebble.

"Which are, you will admit," — this was the smoother channel into which the current of Lang's talk deflected, — "which are, you will admit, not exactly the intellects of a Socrates."

Amelia only looked at him, — a response to which, as has been seen, he never made a like rejoinder. This was, indeed, the first time that the handsome broker had, to her, seemed contemptible. The human heart, it would appear, acts sometimes on the converse of a common principle in physics: A body impelled by two forces, at an angle to each other, moves in a diagonal direction: To sneer at a rival, is to praise him and abuse yourself.

The broker began to be piqued at Amelia's silence.

"Well," said he, "it is very evident that Mr. Dixon is an admirer of yours; and, by the way" (with a delicate curl of the lip), "*I* may be mistaken. In *your* estimation, he may have the intellects of Socrates."

"Mr. Lang, in my estimation Mr. Dixon has neither the head nor the heart to do a thing so cowardly, behind your back, as you are doing now behind his. If he has not the intellect of Socrates, he has not the soul of Iago."

It was the tone and manner that made this speech. Both partook of the cause that inspired it. A statue of Pity would be the modern Palladium of the wisest of the sex. Protection, in her weak way, is the mighty heroism of woman.

As strange as it may seem, Lang, at that moment, thought less of Amelia's anger than of Dixon's presumption. This, coupled to the officiousness which Mr. Gloverson's cashier had manifested after Karl's disappearance, had so added to Lang's hatred, that he had lost his temper. With his usual suspicion, the broker had come to regard Amos as cleverer than he seemed; but had never dreamed of him as a rival. He thought of him now only as an officious dolt, who dared to be presumptuous.

"But then the girl must be mollified," he thought, turning to Amelia. "It would do her good to cry," he continued to himself, in his peculiar philosophy of women. "Crying always does them good. It makes them easier to manage. Yet the thing of it is, she doesn't cry; but seems getting calmer all the time, without a word from me."

He began, nevertheless, in the meekest manner, to smooth away everything he had said, and gradually to

change the subject. At last, he proposed a walk to Peter Job's for an ice, arguing that he could well afford to wait an hour or two, before he asked the formal question, which was to put him in possession of so handsome a fortune.

Amelia seemed glad to go, and Lang, seeing her so easily moulded to his wishes, wholly regained his temper.

So they walked out into the pleasant starlight which had succeeded the morning rain of that balmy winter-time.

They had turned from Market into Kearny, and were proceeding leisurely along between Sutter and Post Streets, when Amelia, involuntarily grasping Lang's arm, stopped suddenly. The last bars of the melody which had arrested Amos were dying on the air.

"What do you see?" asked the broker, stopping too, and looking about him serenely.

"Listen, Mr. Lang!"

"To what?"

"To Karl's song!"

If Amelia's attention had not been wholly absorbed in another direction, she might have been aware of a momentary tremor in the broker's arm.

In the commotion of his feelings, vanity was the bubble that came to the surface. "Words or music?" he demanded.

"Music, on a violin."

"I did not hear it. Nobody but Karl knows the music. It is impossible."

While she was listening, Lang had time to recover himself. "Pshaw!" said he, "I hear nothing. We could scarcely distinguish a fiddle, across a continent;

for Karl is on the other side of the world, by this time. Shall we go on?"

"Not yet, please. I am sure it was the 'Song of Friendship';" and Amelia listened again.

The music was not repeated.

"It is rather fortunate," resumed Lang, after a short silence, attempting to explain any embarrassment he might have manifested, "*very* fortunate, in fact, for those who are near, that Karl is so far away. I am afraid, Miss Clayton, we are indebted for this shock to your own fancy, in which Karl seems to hold so large a place. Were it not for my jealousy, I should bless you for this interest in my old friend. Shall we go now?"

"Well, I suppose we must," and they proceeded to their destination.

In the saloon of the well-known Mr. Peter Job, the broker observed that Amelia was rather more silent than was her wont. His infallible philosophy of the sex was not long in suggesting a cure for this; and he applied it thus: He seemed all at once to be stricken with a deep interest in the gay groups assembled about the tables of that fashionable retreat; bowing to all his acquaintance, and smiling bewitchingly at the prettiest of the ladies. He was peculiarly absorbed in the toilette of a reigning belle, with whose name his own had once been connected in the gossip of Rincon Hill. He could talk of nothing else.

This, however, did not seem to have the desired effect. Amelia was more silent than ever. There was not the proper light in her face; it was, therefore, no jealous spite that kept her so still. Without knowing it, Lang had been looking her in the eyes; for these, although

turned in his direction, had something so dreamy and indefinite about them, then, that for once he did not feel their rebuke.

Lang was puzzled. His philosophy could not be at fault. It must be the woman that was wrong; "and," he concluded, after musing a while, "she must be in love with some one else!"

They were walking leisurely, and rather taciturnly toward Folsom Street, when Amelia, without the least warning, propounded this question:—

"Mr. Lang, could not Mr. Schmerling still be in the city?"

The broker was both surprised and enlightened.

"That's the man," thought he. "She is in love with Karl. He was not gotten out of the way quick enough."—"Karl in the city," was Lang's answer, "and I not know it? Impossible!"

"Yet you are sure no one else knows his music?"

"Yes, Miss Clayton; and,—you will pardon me for saying it,—I am still surer that you are mistaken about having heard it—but see! the moon is coming up."

"I was never so certain of anything," said Amelia aloud, but to herself. "I will have it inquired into to-morrow. I think I know the house."

"So do I," rejoined Lang, hurriedly, "I will investigate it myself."

"And let me know the result immediately?"

"The first thing to-morrow morning."

"Thank you, Mr. Lang."

— Which, at that time, and under the circumstances, produced very much the same effect, as would have resulted from "Curse you, Mr. Lang." This was the echo

Amelia's mellow voice made, then, in the dark places of that gentleman's mind.

In her mother's parlor the young lady seemed more herself, and Lang began to relapse into the quiet of his old belief, namely, that it was only a passing fancy she had for Karl — a species of musical attachment; and second, that nothing could stand before the united strength of his claims and Mrs. Clayton's authority. But why should he not also let music — and that her own — pave a gentle pathway for him? Was not music the disembodied spirit of speech? and could it not go where words couldn't?

"Will you not favor me with something on the piano, Miss Clayton?"

Amelia seated herself directly at the instrument, and, without any prelude, began to sing and play "The Song of Friendship."

Since Karl's disappearance she had thought of him so much, that, by a sort of association of memory, she herself had learned to play the music and sing the song. In fact, the melody had come always to suggest the idea of Karl; and the idea of Karl had come to suggest the melody.

Thus the spirit of the song was carried out, even beyond the imagination of Karl. He himself has said of it: "The music is but the necessary double of the words." In Amelia's memory, Karl had become the necessary double of the music.

Lang was both startled and gratified. He believed he had never before received so handsome a compliment, and Amelia had never been so gracious and so lovely. He thought more of himself, first, and more of her, last.

If a choir of angels, chanting the minstrelsy of the skies, and a choir of mortals, chanting what he had written, were arranged like a Greek chorus and anti-chorus about the death-bed of a young author, to which would he turn his dying ear?

"Miss Clayton, I am delighted," exclaimed George, when the song was ended; "really delighted," and — he told the truth for once.

"Thank you, Mr. Lang," was Amelia's abstracted reply.

"Bless you, Mr. Lang," was the echo which Amelia's mellow voice now made in the mind of the gratified broker.

"There has," said Amelia, still abstractedly, "always been a dear genius about that song."

"How can you be so flattering, my dear Miss Clayton?" rejoined Lang, of course misunderstanding her. "I never thought myself a genius," he continued, in that kind of modesty which is the height of vanity; "never, never in the world. It is true that a man may have written but one poem, like Gray, or painted but one cat, like some old painter I have read about, and still have been a genius, yet that is no proof that I am one of them. No;" and his eyes and voice fell with an expression of intense humility. "No, no. God raises up geniuses, as he does the mountains. They are the natural barriers to the oceans of mediocrity and dullness throughout the ages."

"And to be candid, Mr. Lang," said Amelia, probably for the first time that evening, recollecting who had written the words, "I must say that I have somehow thought better of you ever since I heard that song."

"You have?" and he came up and leaned against the piano at which she was still seated.

How meek we can be when we imagine we are admired!

"Miss Clayton," he began, in his most winning tone, "you encourage me to believe what I have often thought: the consistent villain is to be found only in plays and novels. There is some good in every one. I sometimes cannot believe that I myself am more than half a villain." This was paragraphed with a demure smile. "A great master," continued Lang, "has said something to the effect that the workman is better than his work. 'If the whole is greater than a part' — I think that is the way he has it — 'a whole man must be greater than that part of him which is found in a book.'" The broker approached nearer to her side: "Now, my dear Amelia, you have liked that insignificant part of me which is my song. Take the whole: it has long been yours."

The hand of Amelia, toward which he had extended his, fell at her side.

"Mr. Lang, from what has happened, I think you could have spared me this."

"I suppose I can not appreciate the delicacy of such natures as yours; but I could not think you mine till I had heard it from your own lips, and, dearest Amelia, I have loved you so that" —

"Stop, Mr. Lang! You do not love me, and you know it."

"Shall I swear it?"

"No, sir. A woman may not always know when she loves, but she always knows when she is loved — but this is painful to me, Mr. Lang. Let us never speak of this again."

Amelia left the piano and again took the chair by the window. There was a deep flush upon her face. The broker was simply angry.

"It is not painful to your mother!"

Amelia's face turned deadly pale. "Mr. Lang, this is ungenerous and unmanly."

George seated himself on the sofa at the side nearer to her. After a pause, in which he had been able to regain only part of his presence of mind, he said: "You are right, Amelia, it was not proper to use your mother's name in this matter. I beg your pardon. I can wait," he went on, drawing a long breath, "and I am sure that I can convince you how much you are mistaken. I think I can appreciate the pride you feel — the pride which hesitates to give, where it imagines that it cannot receive; but then I can bear the waiting better if I only hear you *say*, in words, that you love me."

Little flecks of red came and went on the whiteness of Amelia's cheeks, like heat-lightning. She did not even look at him.

"Do but say that you love me, my dear, dear Miss Clayton. Can you appreciate my impatience? I insist."

Amelia turned her eyes upon him. "You insist?"

"Yes, yes; say but that, and I will wait."

"Then, Mr. Lang, I do not love you!"

The broker was thunderstruck. It had been only in moments of vexation that the possibility of her having a fancy for some one else had entered his mind. These misgivings had never dwelt long with him — mere mists they were, that disappeared before the full sun of his own conceit. In the face of his successes, could it be possible that this woman dared not to love him?

"Ah! I know you. You love some one else, don't you?"

"That, sir, is a question you have no right to ask me," and Amelia rose to her feet.

Lang lost all self-control: "Oh! I tell you I know

you. It was first that dreamy Dutchman, who is dead, thank God ; and now it is that reptile Dixon, who soon may be — And you reject *me* ? ”

“ I do.”

“ Your mother doesn’t.”

Amelia’s tall figure was posed majestically, her left hand leaning upon the back of the chair from which she had just risen, while her right arm and hand rose in the natural gesture of contempt: “ Mr. Lang, leave me ! This is cowardly ; this is outrageous. Mr. Dixon, whom you so despise, would lose his right arm before he would do any thing so unmanly.”

His hatred toward Amos, increased by this comparison and added to the previous anger, made the broker fairly wild. He had been walking quickly backward and forward before the sofa from which he had risen. All of a sudden he stopped in front of the young lady, and darting a fierce look into her blanched face, said, with clenched fist and set teeth : —

“ I tell you, Amelia Clayton, you *shall* marry me ! ”

“ Never ! ”

Lang still glared at her. “ You will see the day when you will be glad to do it.”

“ Never ! — go ! ” and Amelia, undaunted, returned his glare, pointing her finger grandly toward the door. In the pallor of her face, now, there was the cold transparency of marble. “ I told you I would be stronger next time. Go, sir.”

“ Stronger ? Yes, when you are at my feet. I have you in my power. And as for that Dixon — that thick-headed favorite, for whom you think you can reject me, since you cannot get Karl — well,” and Lang trembled with rage, “ I will put you where even your Amos will

not marry you, and him where it will trouble you to find him, I promise you."

"Are you going, Mr. Lang, or shall I call the servant?"

The black pulsations of Lang's eyes were terrible, as he turned them back upon her from the door.

The next moment he was in the street.

Amelia felt herself growing suddenly faint. Her strength was disappearing with her foe. She had presence of mind, however, to hasten to her own room, where, having plunged her hands and face into cold water, she threw herself into a chair by the open window. It was not long till tears came — tears, that God-sent cataclysm which is repeating itself forever, and which, in forty minutes or forty seconds, can sweep away so many evils from the world of women.

Drying her eyes, Amelia still sat at the open window, drinking in the balm of the evening. The whole lawn was fresher from the morning rain, as she was from her tears.

Two little birds — one of which, probably, it was, that had sung its epithalamium in the ears of Amos — had pitched their gipsy tent in an acacia just beneath her window; and, as the moon grew brighter, Amelia could occasionally hear their dream-talk.

At that moment, the threat against Amos was all her mind would dwell upon. It had left the darkest impression of all the foregoing scene. Lang was furious, and might do Mr. Dixon some injury — all on her account. Would she ever see Mr. Dixon again? How should she warn him of the danger? Amelia must have asked these questions of the sky, for her eyes were looking at it with a vague unrest.

Then she would turn again to the lawn, where she could distinguish the scarlet dahlias, bending over and touching the pale chrysanthemums with their passionate lips, like Diana bending over Endymion sleeping in the moonlight. Suddenly she would think of Karl, but there was a kind of haze about him. Sadness always came with the thought, and a queer sense of distance; while the idea of Amos had, linked with it, as queer a sense of nearness. When she thought of him, — and she thought of him more than of Karl to-night, — she was thrilled with that strange feeling which, for instance, the sight of a woman's hand will sometimes inspire in a man. Amelia, in the purity of her mind, thought herself attracted by the great good heart of Mr. Dixon, and by pity for the honest sorrows into which it had led him.

But that was not all. It was something in the moonlight — the kiss of Diana, rejected by the drowsy shepherd of Latmos, which has lingered in that light through the æons — something in it twin to the power that sways the tides of the ocean, and gives gender to the flowers and the grasses. Amelia was attracted by the masculineness of Amos — that undefined complement of her being.

And that is why she turned with such delight to the dream-talk of the mated birds, and watched, with so tender an interest, the elfin somnambulism of the flowers.

At that moment, Amos Dixon was standing alone on Telegraph Hill, in the glamour of a pleased uncertainty, and in the hazy light of a reflected hope.

CHAPTER XXII.

KARL SCHMERLING.

ABOUT ten o'clock the next morning, two gentlemen passed each other on a pair of rickety stairs, which led from the sidewalk to the second story of a sombre-looking house, on Kearny, between Sutter and Post streets. That was, of course, before the late improvements.

The ground-floor of this house was the seat of that miscellaneous shrine of housewives, a grocery — the only substitute the gossips of America have for the public fountain of Europe. The sign, above the door, as first executed, read, ANTON ZIMMERMANN. Over this surname just one transparent coat of white paint had been plastered, and CARPENTER, the English for Zimmermann, had been painted. The ANTON had not been touched. To change that into Anthony would have taken more room and more money. So it now read, the old Anton and the new Carpenter; and the proprietor, to use his own words, was "a foos trate Amerikenn, vat voted regular and nefer scratched hees teeket."

Yet this thin coat of paint was continually letting his past into his present, just as the transparency of our own pretensions, dear reader, so often serves us.

The two gentlemen, who passed each other on the stairs, bowed stiffly. The one who was descending, said, between his teeth: "Morning, Mr. Dixon." The other

returned, simply: "Mr. Lang," and ascended to the door at which the steps terminated.

The broker took the direction of his office, his hatred toward Amos increased at least tenfold. "That fellow," thought Lang, "has been sent here by her, on the same errand. This is insult to injury. He will fail here, as I have failed, but the offense is all the same. That man is my evil genius."

The door at the head of the stairs stood ajar, and a red face was peering out of it. "*Potz Tausend!*" was the exclamation which greeted Amos, as the door flew half-open, and the form of a woman stood on the threshold. Placing her brawny, bare arms akimbo, she contemplated Mr. Dixon from head to foot: "When you wants to see my man, Mr. Carpenter, you goes below."

"Madam, I merely want to see Mr. Karl Schmerling, who, I have reason to believe, is in this house."

"Tat is youst vat dat oder feller wanted. I don't know 'um!"

During this speech, the Frau Carpenter, formerly Zimmermann, closed the door and stood on the outside: "You youst go right away. I youst call my man, Anton — No I won't neider!"

Amos noticed a change of color in the woman's face, at the close of this last pronunciamiento. "I am very sorry, madam, that my duty causes me to cross you so, but I am sure there is something wrong here."

"Den you dinks I lies, do I? I will youst haf my charackter inquired of!"

"You see that policeman, on that corner?"

"*Ach mein Gott!* a boliceman! — you will bring a boliceman in mein house?"

At this instant, Amos rushed wildly by her, through the door. He had heard the same familiar violin, and, following the sound, he came into the front room just above the grocery. He could neither advance nor speak.

Before him, propped up by pillows on a bed, was an emaciated figure, whose pale face was bent fixedly over the instrument Amos had heard. The sudden opening of the door had not been noticed. But, as Amos was trying to regain his breath, a pair of languid eyes met his.

Then there was a wild shriek, and the violin fell upon the floor and broke.

Dixon rushed forward and caught the figure in his arms. "O Schmerling! Schmerling, what can this mean?"

No answer.

"How came you here, Karl?"

No answer.

"What on earth has happened?"

Still no answer. Karl Schmerling was senseless.

The Frau Carpenter had followed Amos, in speechless terror. Her man, Anton, attracted by the shriek, abandoned his grocery to an ill-fed younger brother, and, making his appearance on the scene, demanded, in a deep guttural: "*Was ist das?*"

"Ach! Anton!" groaned his spouse, wringing her hands. "Ach! der Herr Baron!" and the good soul burst into tears.

"Vat you do here?" blurted out Anton, glaring fiercely at Amos, who was sprinkling water upon the face of Karl.

"He has killt de goot baron!" moaned the terror-stricken woman.

"Yes, yes! Dat is de man he talks about ven he vas crazy — vell, I put him out, any vay!"

Karl was, meantime, passing from his fainting-fit into a raging fever. Dixon eased him tenderly on the bed, and, while smoothing the pillows, asked: "Has he had a doctor?"

"Yes, yes," answered the wife.

"Well, go for him quick!"

"I go, I go!"

"Stop, voman!" said the husband, catching her by the arm and detaining her; then, turning to Amos, "Is you de boss of my vife, say? I haf kept dis man, von Schmerling, sick a bed for tree months, youst because my vife once lived on her fader mit his property; and youst because he was found dead one night very late in front of mine house! Is dat right, say?"

"Ach!" sighed Frau Carpenter, between anxiety for Karl, and fear of her husband, "ach! der poor goot Baron, vat safed my old fader from prison, and let him loose a whole year's rent from his wineryard in Germany already!"

"Yes, vife, der Herr von Schmerling may be a goot man, a werry goot man; but he has no money. He has not paid his poard!"

"I have money, sir," said Amos. "Go for the doctor, I tell you! Will you let a fellow creature die so?"

And Amos caught up a towel, and, wetting it, bound it about the hot temples of Karl.

"O Anton, let me go, let me go!"

"Stop, voman!" said the husband, again detaining her, while he growled at Dixon, "yes, I dink you has money, and some vas is not yours, and you keeps it, too. You ish youst de man dat Mr. von Schmerling didn't vant to see."

Amos approached the two : " Here, madam, take that, and buy as much ice as you can carry. We must keep his head cool till the doctor comes. If you make haste, you may save the life of him whom I understand to be your old master."

" Gif me dat money, vife !"

" Oh ! certain : he was de best master — I go, an't it, Anton ?"

" Yes, go — run ! He dares not detain you," interposed Amos, as he threw himself between the last speaker and her husband, and looked him squarely in the eye. " Now," said Dixon, " you go for the doctor yourself. Do you hear ?"

" Ven you pays me for tree months poard first."

" I will pay you for everything."

" Right avay !"

" You thing !" exclaimed Amos, raising his clenched fist. " Will you go ?"

Brutes in human shape, are generally cowards. Anton elevated his thick shoulders and sunk his blood-shot eyes, as he growled : " Vell, I was going all de time ;" and Amos was left alone, anxiously watching and waiting, by the bed-side of Karl.

It was not long till Frau Carpenter's return with the ice ; but the fear of Karl's dying before the doctor could come, had, to Dixon, expanded the moments into hours. After exhausting his invention in attempts to allay the fever, he had had time to accuse himself for not having gone for the doctor, and to puzzle his mind inextricably in trying to explain and reconcile all that he knew about the man before him.

Quick steps were heard, at last, on the rickety stairs, leading from the street ; and the contrasting silence of

the chamber was ghastly. The doctor approached the bed with noiseless haste. Then the silence was more ghastly than before.

Amos riveted his eyes upon the physician's face. Frau Carpenter, with clasped hands, gazed as fixedly at Karl. That was the woman in her — she did not reason. Her eyes were with her heart; for her old master had excited in her something better than love, and nobler than gratitude — something, too, thank God, that dwells alike in charwomen and in queens. Karl had given her a chance to be kind to him disinterestedly.

It must have been a minute before this silence was broken; but it was one of those awful minutes when the man of medicine — the prime minister of Life and Death — stands in the ante-room of his two masters, and yet is autocrat *there* with the wisest of us.

Even Anton tried to breathe more softly.

At last the doctor turned deliberately around and met the steady gaze of Amos. Two questions passed each other midway in their course, from each pair of eyes. The light in those of the physician, became softer first, and he said, "Your name cannot be Mr. Lang?"

"Oh no, sir!" exclaimed Dixon, pointing eagerly at Karl, "but tell me that he is not going to die."

"My good sir," said the doctor, calmly, "I cannot tell you that. We can only do our best, and hope the rest." And he turned again to the patient and busied himself in administering anodynes.

"I may stay with him, may I not, doctor? My name is Dixon, not Lang. It is I, you know, who am responsible for your bill, and for everything. You will grant me this favor in return? No, no, I did not mean to say anything about money, or to hire you; but — but you will let me remain; will you not?"

"Yes, if you will not mention Lang's name here. That man has done the patient some great wrong. I think it will do him good to have a friend by him, when he comes to consciousness again, if,"— here the doctor paused a moment — "if he ever comes to consciousness again."

Frau Carpenter had disappeared to have a prescription filled at the neighboring apothecary's. Anton yet stood in the middle of the room, in awe and wonder at the scene.

"I must send to my employer," said Amos, "notifying him that I will not be at business to-day."

"I go, I go!" gasped Anton.

"No, no; you go down to your grocery, and send up the boy I saw there."

Anton obeyed like a lamb; and the boy took a message to the counting-house of Mr. Gloverson.

The physician now drew a chair up to the side of that into which Dixon had patiently seated himself.

"Doctor," began Amos, "I do not know exactly why, but I see that you are a good man. Now, if I ask any impertinent question you must stop me. Do tell me what has come over this other good man, Mr. Schmerling."

"You are complimentary, sir. It is his mind that is sick, sir. Some heavy wrong is upon it. I was called up late one night, several weeks since, and found the patient in the grocery below, in a paroxysm of brain fever such as he has now. Fainting, he had fallen against the door, and so aroused the inmates. I suppose he had been wandering unconscious about the city ever since one shock of his troubles, more powerful than the others, had taken from him the complete possession of his senses.

I ordered him to be carried immediately to bed. Mrs. Carpenter had, with an effort, recognized him as the proprietor of the estate upon which she had been born and bred; and was only too glad to obey me. Anton objected on the score of pay, seeing that he found nothing valuable on Mr. Von Schmerling's person. The wife prevailed, however, on representing her old master as very rich, and as certain to reward them all liberally. Since then, in his placid moments, I have been able to learn nothing from him — only the horror he has of having his whereabouts known to anybody. In pressing him, one time, with the unreasonableness of his conduct, I well nigh plunged him again into a paroxysm, and I have since abstained wholly. In his ravings, he has repeatedly mentioned a Mr. George Lang as having betrayed him, but so indefinitely that I could make nothing of it. In his wildest moments, he has mentioned your name frequently and always kindly. It is for that reason I consent to have you by him. His malady never had so good a subject. Any other man would have died or recovered long ago. So transparent is his nature, and so weak his frame, that the least excitement may now be fatal to him. Remember, therefore, that however reasonably he talks, you are, on no account, to mention the name of George Lang."

As the Frau Carpenter returned, Amos reached forward and pressed the doctor's hand. They seemed to understand each other. It was the simple freemasonry of two good men.

The more powerful sedatives, which the woman had brought, produced a marked effect for the better. The physician promised to come again in the afternoon, and smiled hopefully as he retired.

Amos now prevailed upon Frau Carpenter to go to her morning's work, and, seated anxiously by the bedside, he was again alone with Karl.

To many young men, the isolated life of California is an exile from the hearth. It is their misfortune, rather than their fault, that they have never seen a death-bed. The sea that lashes them ceaselessly against the living, drives them over, and swallows up the broken and the dying.

This, in truth, was a new scene to Amos. A vast continent had spread between him and the sick room of his mother. Nothing of the reality had reached him, but the one great grief and her last blessing; and these had mellowed his whole life.

Amos had, as has been said, prescribed ice for the hot temples of the patient, but this was dictated, not so much by experience, as by the medicine of common sense. He was now aware that he could do nothing but watch and wait; and, as he sat and gazed at the changes on the transparent face of Karl, he noted the fine effects of white and crimson, and might have thought them beautiful, if he had not connected them in his mind with suffering. It seemed that this face had gained in spirituality what the wasted frame had lost in strength. The wreck of some treasure ship, cast upon a bleak lone coast — the men and master gone, but the precious freightage left — this was the one picture that, out of the stillness and strangeness, kept coming and going in the fancy of Amos.

As he thought this thought, and still gazed, a queer half consciousness came over him. He heard nothing from the street below, and nothing of Frau Carpenter, busy about her work in the other part of the house.

There are places, by their nature, sacred to silence, were Babel all around them. There are moments when silence appears to be something positive, and defends its own borders. There are moments, too, when it is detected by the eye rather than the ear.

Somehow, Amos himself seemed alone by the strand of a desert sea. By and by, a sound arose, as if in very mercy to the ear — a sound low and almost regular; near, yet far away. It must be the steady beat of the waves upon the shore: for again the same picture of the stranded treasure-ship is before him — only nearer and the more oppressive in the silence, and in the bleakness of the coast and the utter absence of the living. The regular sound grows gradually louder and harsher, and Amos becomes suddenly conscious that he is still alone in the sick chamber, and that he hears only the troubled breathing of Karl.

The patient seemed more uneasy, and began muttering to himself: "If he wanted my money" — this was the first intelligible thing that Dixon caught from the lips of Karl — "if he wanted my money, why did he not ask me for it. It was not the money, but the friend *I* wanted."

Karl now turned perturbedly on his pillow, and nothing but the harsh breathing was heard. The doctor had told Amos what to expect when the fever was approaching its height, so he could do nothing but put more ice to the patient's head, and still watch, and, in his own despite, listen.

Karl turned again on his pillow: "You say the stock is worthless, and Mr. Lang knew it all the time? . . . Well, have I not waited and doubted long, . . . so long, . . . long? . . . walking con-

stantly in the shadow of my own presentiment. . . .
 I must believe it then. . . . Not the testimony
 of one man, but of many against the confidence of years.
 . . . Can a nature change? The search for gold had
 not sullied the clear streamlet of his youth. . . .
 The whirlpool! . . . the whirlpool! —

‘Und es wallet und siedet und brauset und zischt,
 Wie wenn Wasser mit Feuer sich mengt,’¹

O God, O God! I cannot see him! . . . Do not
 let him in! I must not see him. Has shame no wall to
 him — no iron to bind or burn? . . . Let him
 come, then, if I must kill him! Nemesis and Justice are
 one. . . . No, no, Justice is blind. I must kill my-
 self, kill myself. It was my too easy confidence that
 tempted him to betray me. The temptation was the
 greater crime. . . . Let me die like Cato. Let me
 do it quickly, for I — am sinking . . . sinking —

‘Und es wallet und siedet und brauset und zischt,
 Wie wenn Wasser mit Feuer sich mengt,
 Bis zum Himmel spritzt der dampfende Gischt,
 Und Flut auf Flut sich ohn’ Ende drängt,
 Und will sich nimmer erschöpfen und leeren
 Als wollte das Meer noch ein Meer gebären.’²

Here Karl pressed his hands convulsively to his

¹ “And it bubbles and seethes, and it hisses and roars,
 As when fire is with water commix’d and contending.”

Bulwer’s Translation.

² “And it bubbles and seethes, and it hisses and roars,
 As when fire is with water commix’d and contending,
 And the spray of its wrath to the welkin upsoars,
 And flood upon flood hurries on, never ending;
 And it never *will* rest, nor from travail be free,
 Like a sea that is laboring the birth of a sea.” — *Ibid.*

temples. After a short pause, he turned his face toward Amos, and, glaring at him, continued : —

“ Kill myself? No ! That is unchristian and cowardly. I must forgive him. . . . Was Plato a coward? Back, devil . . . *doch, doch*, I *will* forgive him . . . and . . . and I must die, die, die, —

‘ Und es wallet und siedet und brauset und zischt,’

— Louder — what — what — louder — what? ”

Karl stopped suddenly ; and, sitting stark upright in bed, repeated slowly, in his own language, as if after spirits, this other strophe from the “ Diver ” : —

“ From the deep then I call'd upon God — and he heard me ;
In the dread of my need, He vouchsafed to mine eye
A rock jutting out from the grave that interr'd me ;
I sprung there, I clung there — and Death pass'd me by.”

Then, without the least resistance, he allowed his head to be placed on the pillow again ; and, with a smile upon his lips, he sank into a quiet slumber.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OUT OF THE SHADOW.

AMOS still sat by the bed-side, silently watching the sleeper. Frau Carpenter had once or twice glided through the room, and gone back to her duties, each time with a brighter face. Thus an hour passed, when Karl awoke, and, casting his eyes about the room as if in search of something, said: "Why, Mr. Dixon, I am so glad to see you; I know you will not betray my whereabouts. I cannot tell why, but I felt sure you were by me. How did you get here? — Oh! yes, I remember! I just saw you come in. You will excuse me if I was so wrapped up in my music as not to show you the proper attention."

Karl sighed, changing his position slightly, and continued: "I sometimes think my spirit has gone to the other world, leaving only its shadow in this; and, sometimes, the spirit seems all in this world and the shadow in the next. Lying here and playing fitfully upon my violin, I have imagined the spirit and shadow crossing each other on the line of life, continually; but how is Miss Clayton?"

"She is well and happy, I suppose," — here Amos drew a long breath and dropped his eyes, — "but I think we would better not speak of her now."

"Why, Mr. Dixon?"

"There are several reasons; one of which is that the doctor has forbidden you to talk much."

"Is she — has she — has she — forgotten me entirely?"

"She speaks of you often; but, my dear Mr. Schmerling, believe me, this is not now a proper subject for you."

"What, *she* not a proper subject? That is the doctor's mistake. Amelia Clayton is a theme worthy of a death-bed! Such as she would reverse the old legend of the Lurley — would lure us mortals back to life."

"I assure you," rejoined Amos, "it is a very dear, in fact, the dearest subject to me, and I cannot tell you how it relieves me to say so to you; but — but we will obey the doctor till you are better."

"Better," repeated Karl, shaking his head. "I don't know, I don't know; I have out-lived my greatest trust. I have already dreamed too long. If I had loved some pure woman as I have one man, my heart would not have been so easily dragged from its anchorage. I should have acted more and trusted less. I have dreamed too long."

Amos looked into Karl's clear face. "I knew it was not love between him and Amelia; but then I will not mention her." This was the unuttered thought with which Amos filled up the slight interval before Karl spoke again:—

"As I have lain here, I have often thought how much our days go like the lapse of the storied river, my dear old Rhine — though to some they go rather like the Rhone, rapid at Seyssel, but peaceful at Vaucluse. Creation is the articulate speech of God. Men are his words of action and passion — his verbs. They either

do or suffer. Our lives flow from one table-land, whether by the quiet meads of Languedoc, or the wave-lashed crags of Drachenfels and Ehrenbreitstein — only one mountain peak of God's will to divide the water-drops of our souls from a Rhine, or Rhone of fate."

A moment of silence intervened, when Karl, having evidently pursued the thought to himself, exclaimed: "The hieroglyphics of the stars! — the hereafter is written beyond and back of them. We can read it better by the light of faith than by the mists of philosophers. So it is no disparagement that our destinies are like drops of water. Are they not as flexible as a moment of time, which is often an age of passion; and may they not compass the globe — nay, the universe? The breath of God can expand them; and, though the bubbles are brief, we can see reflected in them ourselves, the green earth, the dome of heaven, and the rainbow overarching all."

Amos could only look and listen. He thought Karl grew better as he talked; for his face was aglow with the thoughts he was uttering, and with that happier and diviner trust which men may feel but never utter.

"Why, you are better now, Mr. Schmerling," said Amos. "You look so much better."

"Then we can speak about Miss Clayton; may we not?" rejoined Karl, behind a look of pleading inquiry.

Amos hesitated. His duty was now uncertain; but his heart was talking Amelia Clayton all the time.

"You have said," Karl proceeded, "that it is a dear subject to you; and the sentiment is manly. It ennobles a man to love such a woman."

"God bless you, Mr. Schmerling! — May I always call you Karl hereafter?"

"Certainly, my dear fellow ; I want you to."

"God bless you, then, under any name, for what you have said. I think I am better since I loved her, and I have loved her since I saw her first, but — but I suffer more than I ever did before."

"Take heart, take heart if she has raised you higher than you were. The storm is heaviest on the mountain, but the sunshine comes there the earliest."

All of Dixon's hopefulness against hope lived again in the warmth of the smile with which Karl had uttered this last speech. "I sometimes think," said Amos, "that everything happens for the best ; but it is difficult to see her good in all I know."

"Come, come, never despair. Here is a little packet that I put up for you, in the holiday time, when I was lying here all alone. It contains something for you, and something for her — mere remembrances, indeed, yet you two, with these kind people here, are my only heirs — even in this respect," added Karl, sighing. "Thus — for Amelia must esteem you if she really knows you — thus without being aware of your affection I have linked you in my own. There may be fate in it. At least, may the blessing that I give with them be worth more than the baubles. Here" (handing the packet) "I wish you both joy !"

Amos shook his head, and, taking what was proffered him, read, with a shudder : "*For Mr. Dixon ; to be opened when I am dead !*"

Amos looked from the packet to the giver, and, recovering himself slightly, said : "It will be long before I shall have to open it, Karl, and you must think so, too. Will you ?"

Karl smiled again. "At any rate, that is my last will and testament, and my blessing on you and Amelia is the codicil."

"I fear," said Amos, shaking his head again, "I fear — but no matter."

"What do you fear?"

Amos did not answer.

"Come, what do you fear?"

"I fear — in fact, I am sure she is to marry another!"

"What other?"

"Now, we must change the subject."

"Why?"

"Oh! we must, we must."

"How could I have been so stupid!" exclaimed Karl, flushing instantly. "He told me his intentions long ago. It is the man whom I can forgive all, but marrying her. I will warn her, though I meet him in doing it. Ask her to come here immediately!"

"Yes, yes, to-morrow you shall see her. Be quiet now."

"No, I must tell her this very day, this very hour, of your goodness and his villainy; and warn her of Lang — Lang. . . . O God! Quick, if you love her — if you would be kind to me. Bring her — bring her quick. She will surely come — for I am sinking, sinking again . . . sinking"

'Und es wallet und siedet und brauset und zischt'

Do you hear the whirlpool? But where is Amelia. Bring Amelia. I do not see Amelia! Amelia! Amelia!"

Amos called Frau Carpenter into the room; hurried down into the grocery; sent Anton for the doctor; and, stopping the first empty carriage passing in the street, he threw himself into it, ordering the driver to take him in all haste to Mrs. Clayton's on Folsom Street.

The thoughts that passed in Dixon's mind during this

ride were many and various, resulting all in a complex sensation of pleasure. He did not think of forwarding his own suit, or ruining that of his rival by the revelations Karl had unconsciously made to him, or by those Karl was likely to make to Amelia. He believed that his friend must see her, or die in the paroxysm caused by the ungratified desire to see her. Nothing else would have taken him to the house whence, the very night before, he believed he had been dismissed — dismissed, though, in the kindness with which *she* did everything. Her duty was with another, and she had simply notified him, in some way he could not remember, through the shock it gave. The manner had been like herself: it was the fact that had crushed him. Between her duty, which sent him away, and his duty to Karl, which brought him back, a hope had sprung up that he did not analyze, because he knew nothing how or whence it came. So, Amos felt a pleasant thrill as he approached the elegant house again.

Amelia's rejection of Lang had already reached her mother through an angry note, in which the broker solicited a private interview with Mrs. Clayton at a later hour. The anger of this note had communicated itself, on the principle of accelerated motion, first to Mrs. Clayton, then to Miss Garr, and then, with all its accumulated violence, it had been hurled against the devoted head of Amelia.

The irate feeling of Miss Sophia was something astonishing, even to Mrs. Clayton. It seemed, indeed, to partake of the nature of a bomb-shell; for it exploded in all directions, including that of Mr. Lang himself. She shook her indignant fist, and threatened to let that

gentleman know what he was about, and how he could trifle with girlish confidence, etc., etc. Mrs. Clayton did not exactly see where Mr. Lang was at fault, but was sure that Miss Garr's sentiments were prompted by pure friendship.

So they were ; only Mrs. Clayton was somewhat mistaken as to the object. The pure friendship was for Miss Sophia, herself, and not for her old friend from the State of Maine.

A slur against that favored Dixon had also been conveyed, per note, from Mr. Lang to Mrs. Clayton, from Mrs. Clayton to Miss Garr, and from Mrs. Clayton and Miss Garr jointly, and with gigantic addenda, to Amelia, who had finally retired to her own room. The two other ladies, though greatly chagrined by this movement, did not desert the parlor, or their theme. In fact, Miss Garr had just finished a long tirade to Mrs. Clayton, on the fiendish deceit of that Dixon, practised on her own feelings, and on his evident fiendish designs upon her daughter Amelia, when the servant announced MR. DIXON, in person.

The faces of the two ladies looked very much like those in the candle-light pictures of the old Flemish artists.

"The devil!" exclaimed Miss Sophia, stopping short; then, seeing that her allusion to her patron saint had produced a bad impression upon Mrs. Clayton, continued in a flash: "The devil—is always about when you are talking of him."

This was not very skillful, but it quieted Mrs. Clayton's conscientious scruples about profane language, and enabled her to resign the full force of her mind to her anger, and to her hatred for Amos.

— Who now entered the parlor hurriedly, and in

manifest agitation. "Good afternoon, ladies," said he; "is Miss Clayton in?"

"Humph?" remarked Miss Sophia, with a tone and manner which are best conveyed by an interrogation point—which figurative interrogation point that estimable lady continued with her eyes, placing it alternately at the head and at the feet of Mr. Dixon.

"My daughter is in," observed Mrs. Clayton, stiffly.

"I should like to see Miss Clayton, if you please," faltered Amos, vainly attempting to appear at his ease.

"Miss Clayton should not like to see you, Mr. Dixon," replied the mother, in a spiteful falsetto, as she looked for encouragement to Miss Garr.

"To make a long matter short, sir," now volunteered the lady appealed to, "to make a long matter short," and Miss Garr drew herself up to her full height, which, to tell the truth, was not very imposing, "Miss Clayton refuses to see you, sir!"

"But I must see her—it is"—

"Do you hear this impudence, Sophia, and in my own house? 'Must see her'—I say you must *not* and shall not see her, and you must leave this house, and never enter it again. There, now!" Mrs. Clayton ended with the battery of her eyes turned triumphantly upon Sophia, whose appreciative approval was sent back by a similar pair of hard, sharp instruments.

"It is a case of life and death, I wanted to say, when you interrupted me."

"Life and death!" ejaculated the faithful Sophia; "what is your life or death to us, or, especially, to her. She will not see you, so you better go and die!"

Amos did not know how much he had hoped, till he found he had hoped in vain. His head began to reel.

Still he persisted in saying: "If I can see her, I can save a life. Let me see her — for God's sake, let me see her!"

"The man is crazy, Sophia, I will have him put out."

Amos felt his pride rising, and his head growing steadier.

"Miss Clayton, then, has refused to see me under any circumstances?"

"Yes, and —"

"That is enough. I did not come here again on my own account, but to save another's life. I have done all that I can, without betraying a secret which is not mine. You, her mother, never rebuffed me here before. It must be by her desire, and" — his voice falling almost to a whisper — "and she will never have to repeat it!"

Amos hurried to the door, where he suddenly paused. "The end must justify the means," he said desperately. "She may despise me on my own errand; she *shall* not on his. I may have been presumptuous to her, and false to myself, but I must not be false to him — when," he added falteringly, "when nothing but my own happiness stands in the way."

The two ladies heard these unintelligible words in mute astonishment. They stood in the hall blankly staring to each other, as Amos walked briskly past them, knocking at every door and calling loudly for Miss Clayton. Thus he went through the lower part of the house, astonishing the cook by the manner in which he opened the door, when he received no answer. The cook, however, consoled herself by the remark that she "always thought so." She, having failed to make any impression on the coachman, believed that he had been caught in some theft, and that Mr. Dixon was searching the premises for the missing goods.

As Amos, retracing his steps, started up stairs, Mrs. Clayton shrieked and fainted. Miss Garr stood for awhile riveted to the floor. Amos meantime could be heard aloft, knocking, calling for Miss Clayton, and opening doors. Finally, Sophia began to shriek, too, — but for the coachman. Miss Garr was evidently more anxious to have Dixon put out, than to bring Mrs. Clayton to from her fainting fit.

While Sophia was rummaging the coach-house and the back yard for the coachman, Amos had come down stairs, exclaiming, as he rushed into the street, "She has run away from me — she has run away from me!"

When Miss Garr returned, and found Dixon had disappeared in the carriage that had been waiting for him, she ordered the dilatory coachman to carry Mrs. Clayton to a sofa in the parlor, and left the waiting maid to revive her mistress. Miss Garr went to find Amelia, and what was Miss Garr's surprise to discover that Amelia was gone! "He has carried her off — he has carried her off!" were the soothing words with which she burst into the presence of Mrs. Clayton, who was just recovering, and who thereupon went off again with a scream.

Not long after, Amelia returned by the basement door, through which she had gone forth on a little afternoon call at a neighbor's; Sophia, hearing Miss Clayton in the hall, rushed at her madly and kissed her, with convulsive energy, on the nose, and the hair, and the ears, and once or twice, as it were by mistake, on the cheeks. Then, without a word of explanation, Miss Garr dragged her former pupil into the presence of Mrs. Clayton, who was at that instant again recovering, and who, at the sight of her daughter's alarmed face, and somewhat disarranged toilet, went off this time in violent hysterics.

Amelia, believing some sudden illness to have overtaken her mother, addressed herself tenderly to restoring her; and would have sent for the doctor, if not stopped by Sophia. "It is all on your own account," said that lady, "all on your own account, you ungrateful girl!"

"On my account? Why" —

At this moment Mrs. Clayton's curiosity got partially, at least, the better of her ailment, and she demanded —

"How did you — how d'you get (sob) — how did you get away from him?"

"Away from whom?"

"Why, (sob) that (sob) brute, Dixon!"

"Mother, you must be quite ill! I do not know what you mean — but I am so weary of hearing that gentleman abused."

"Gentleman!" exclaimed the Garr, in virtuous horror.

"Gen-(sob) gen-en-tle-man!" repeated the hysterical Mrs. C.

"Yes, gentleman; and pray do not mention his name again, unless you can mention it respectfully."

"Oh, what will become of me!" almost shrieked Mrs. Clayton. "Do you see how flushed her cheek is? It is the only part of the Clayton in the ingrate. That, at least, has some shame in it!"

"Mother, pray tell me what is the matter with you?"

"What is the matter, after having been carried away by that Dixon!" volunteered Sophia. "Then to ask what is the matter with your afflicted parent!"

"Miss Garr, I have had enough of your interference in my affairs, and you will oblige me by mixing in them no more. Hypocrisy and deceit, even in their sheerest weakness, sometimes cease to be ridiculous. You have passed your limit, and I will bear no more from you" —

turning her back upon the astonished Sophia ; "I am talking to my mother now. Mother, you will please tell me what all this is about."

"Hear her, (sob) hear her! After (sob) insulting her parent's old friend, ha, ha, ha! and her own affectionate teacher, (sob, sob) and going off with that, ah! horrid, horrid — ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you, mother, once for all, I have not seen Mr. Dixon to-day."

"What is this coming to? — and she even denies it to our faces! What is this coming to, Sophia? Ah! ha, ha, ha! Have them take me to my room, instantly!"

And the coachman and the waiting-maid bore her away in their arms.

Amelia had not seen Amos, though she had met the carriage, into a corner of which he had thrust himself, on hurrying into the street. They had passed each other unconsciously. Amelia was thinking, as she walked homewards, how she could best do her duty to her mother, and to herself, bearing and forbearing. Amos was scarce thinking at all, so completely was he overcome by what he considered the twofold consequences of his failure. Had he left anything undone? He could not believe that he had.

After a little time, he recovered enough to remember that he really had had no foundation for his late hopefulness, but the impression that had come to him in the moonlight. Nothing in fact stood between him and the bewilderment of the first shock, which was increased now by the absence of Amelia's kindly manner. Then the horror of what he had just done — rudely searching her house, when she had refused to see him. How would she ever forgive this? Then Karl — but here he be-

came more confused, and repeated the Kearny Street address to the driver many times, and prayed him to make haste, though the horses were doing their utmost.

Finally, having discharged the carriage, Amos stumbled up the rickety stairs leading to the apartments above the grocery. Unannounced, he entered the room he had left but a half hour before. He seated himself listlessly by the bedside of Karl, staring straight ahead of him. He saw the doctor and Frau Carpenter moving noiselessly about, but he did not heed them. By and by, he neither saw nor heard them. Silence again asserted its weird power in the midst of low whispers and muffled footfalls. Once more, out of the stillness and strangeness, the picture of the wrecked treasure-ship gradually rose before him. The shore was more bleak and desolate than ever ; no vestige of a living being ; no sound of the waves upon the beach — yet slowly the ship, as he gazes, breaks to pieces, and he sees the priceless things glitter, as, one after the other, they disappear in the sea, and a long track of mysterious light passes over and lingers about the place where all has been swallowed up.

Amos suddenly rousing himself, discovers that a ray of the afternoon sun has stolen through a small opening in the blinds, directly across the room ; and there, intercepted by the curtains, has paused in a halo about the head of Karl.

“ Well, doctor ? ”

The physician turned his eyes upon Amos, but did not speak.

“ Well, doctor, how is Mr. Schmerling ? ”

There was a questioning look in the eyes of the good physician now ; but still he did not answer.

“ I forgot, I must always call him Karl. Then, doctor, how is Karl ? ”

This time the physician answered : —

“ Karl is dead ! ”

CHAPTER XXIV.

MISS SOPHIA GARR ENGAGES IN THE STUDY OF THE LAW.

AMOS DIXON had not been long gone from the elegant house, when Miss Sophia Garr, caparisoned in a jaunty hat and a ready-made cloak, sallied forth, on a little business of her own.

She took the nearest way to Montgomery Street, and proceeded almost to the head of that thoroughfare. Ascending a very wide flight of steps, she turned to the right, and went up a narrower flight; turning again to the left, she went up a narrower flight still. Without pausing to take breath, Miss Sophia proceeded, by the help of the sky-light, to read the names on a whole army of doors. Making nearly the whole circuit of the long hall, she arrived finally at a door which seemed to meet with her approval, for she nodded her head, knocked, and walked briskly in.

"What a horrid looking man!" she said, as she threw herself upon a well-worn lounge, and breathed heavily.

"What an ugly old vixen!" replied the gentleman thus apostrophized, looking up from the desk at which he sat writing.

"Hem!" rejoined Miss Sophia, eying him wickedly, and still laboring for her breath, after her unwonted exertion.

"Well, madam?"

"How dare you, sir — but this is Mr. Beanson, no doubt?"

"Yes, madam."

"I called, sir," pronounced Miss Garr, in an angry tone, "to have you explain to me explicitly, and without reservation, what constitutes a breach of promise."

Now two different persons had been harassing Mr. Beanson, that very morning, with unpaid bills. Yet it was a characteristic of this remarkable man that all his greatest troubles were in the future — that undiscovered country of his first brief, and the presidency. He was possessed of a wonderful talent at apprehending evil; and he had not heard Miss Sophia this long, without exerting it. He thought instantly of the snares laid for unsuspecting young men by designing females, and did not grow calmer as his visitor repeated: —

"Come, sir; you profess to be a lawyer, if you are not. Can you tell me, sir?"

"M-madam, I don't know you!" exclaimed Mr. Beanson, feeling very much confused, but looking, as he always did, very aggressive.

"I found your card in my card-case, and I want to know, sir, what constitutes a breach of promise."

"Madam, I tell you I don't know you *at all*!"

"But did you not leave your card in my card-case at Mrs. Clayton's?"

"I did, madam, but that does not constitute a breach of promise; and I warn you now," said Mr. Beanson, raising his voice and his forefinger, and shaking both at her simultaneously, "I warn you now, madam, that you cannot ground an action for breach of promise on a little skillful advertising!"

"What do you mean, sir?"

Mr. Beanson observed a sudden and marked change coming over the features of his visitor, and took it for the herald of her discomfiture and his own triumph. "What do I mean?" iterated Mr. Beanson. "I mean, madam, that in this latter stage of juridical enlightenment, a man cannot be held for breach of promise, or prosecuted for breach of promise, by a woman whom he never saw before in his life — and, for that matter, never wishes to see again — just because he put his business card in her card-case." Here the speaker, seeing the remarkable effect of his philippic, launched himself upon his feet, the better to enjoy the ovation he was preparing for himself. As he undoubled his exceeding length before Sophia, he had the satisfaction of seeing the additional effect he was producing, even apart from his oratory. It was the very yellow jaundice of tones, in which Mr. Beanson concluded: —

"No, madam, you would not get any intelligent court in the land, in these premises, to find cause of action. It was nothing but a skillful advertisement — in short, an act of commercial and legal genius. You, I suppose, would make it a crime punishable by marriage with such as you. The thing is simply ridiculous! Madam, I have done. Have you?"

Mr. Beanson resumed his seat triumphantly, and eyed the astonished Garr with an expression that made his head look older than common.

Miss Sophia could not have interrupted the foregoing forensic display, if she had tried. In her bewilderment, she was mutely deciding whether she, Sophia Garr, or all the men were going stark mad. George Lang had offered himself to Amelia, after being accepted by herself. From the way that Dixon had just acted in Mrs.

Clayton's parlor, there was very little doubt of his utter lunacy. Then, this impudent red-haired wretch — whom she had never attempted to marry — either he or she was certainly crazy. The question was too complicated for a prompt decision.

The two had sat for some moments, glaring at each other, in profound silence, when Miss Garr suddenly exclaimed: "You long-waisted vagabond, shut up!"

This might have been effectual in a contest with a person of her own sex; since it might have shocked into silence or proved an *Ultima Thule* of feminine virulence. When, however, Mr. Beanson, having taken some time to consider, remembered that he was not talking at all when he was requested to "shut up," the thing struck him as laughable. Accordingly Mr. Beanson laughed — laughed loud and long; till Mr. Beanson had laughed out all the fun there was in the occurrence, and some of his own anger, to boot.

"Now, madam," said he, facetiously, "I am prepared to part with you."

Miss Garr was more angry than ever.

"I say, madam, I am prepared to part with you; I will not detain you further."

"You ugly, hateful, impudent wretch!" remarked Sophia, finding speech at last. "You may insult me here as much as you please, since I am without a protector, but you shall not drive me away, till you have answered my question. I would as soon marry a keg of nails as you, sir; so you may set your mind at rest! It is somebody else that my outraged feelings are interested in — somebody else of more consequence than you, though I verily believe he is as big a villain" —

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Beanson, as any other drowning

man might have done, before he was swallowed up by any other flood.

"Do you suppose, sir, I would walk all the way here from Folsom Street, and up these interminable stairs, and then go away, without knowing what constitutes a breach of promise? I would have you know, sir, that my case is urgent."

"Then you did not intend to prosecute me at all?" asked Mr. Beanson, opening his eyes very wide.

"Have I not told you once? Would I prosecute a keg of nails, you ninny?"

As strange as it may seem, a bland smile, which spread over the entire face of Mr. Beanson, was the result of this last poisoned arrow of Miss Garr. The *ignis fatuus* of his first brief was again rising over the marshes of his present embarrassments. "Well, well, madam," rejoined Mr. Beanson, "I will do anything in the world to serve you. Who is it, by the way, that you wish to prosecute?"

"I don't know as that is any of your business at present, sir; I first want an answer to the question I have asked about forty times: What constitutes a breach of promise?"

"To tell the truth, madam, there are so many conditions to a breach of promise that an abstract definition of it would not do the least good in the world; and I could not give you one, without consulting my books—but do you absolutely insist upon mentioning no names?"

"I do, sir."

"Will you state the case, then, without names?"

"You must see, sir, that my natural delicacy revolts against any revelation to strangers."

"Why, madam, counsellor and client should never be

strangers. Besides, you must be aware that a breach of promise depends on so many things — as I have said before, there are so many conditions that we can not proceed at all unless you answer certain questions ; such as, for instance, whether you — I mean the lady, the plaintiff, in fact, has any proof of a promise, express or implied.”

Miss Garr looked about the room in silent uncertainty.

“ Have you — I mean, has the lady, for example, any witnesses — any one who has heard the defendant that is to be,” pursued Mr. Beanson, in the language of the future, “ express or imply a promise ? ”

She could not say that the lady had.

“ Had she any letters to show which contained a promise, either express or implied ? ”

“ The lady,” responded Miss Garr mysteriously, “ the lady has not.”

“ Has the plaintiff been injured in any way by the defendant ? ”

“ Yes, grossly ! ”

“ Ah ! there I begin to see a case. Set the damages heavy — set the damages heavy. By the by, is the defendant rich ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Good ! ” said Mr. Beanson, rubbing his hands. “ We will make the villain suffer.”

“ Thank you, Mr. Beanson. Fifty thousand dollars will be little enough. Thank you, Mr. Beanson ; ” and Miss Garr actually shook hands with Mr. Beanson on the spot.

“ Hem, ah ! what was — the — nature of — these injuries — that you say the defendant — had inflicted upon you — the lady, I should say, the plaintiff ? ”

Miss Garr feigned an uneasy look. "Must I tell?" she demanded, dropping her eyes.

"I am sorry, madam, it is absolutely necessary; since the whole case seems to hang upon that injury, or those injuries, alone."

"Well, then," said Sophia, riveting her maidenly orbs meekly upon a broken coal-scuttle, "well, then, sir, he kissed her in the dark!"

"Is that all?"

"Is it not enough, sir?"

"It might have been enough," replied Mr. Beanson, in the stumbling innocence which had been the bane of his life, "it might have been enough, madam, for the defendant, or for the plaintiff, even, but is hardly enough to ground an action of breach of promise upon."

Miss Garr was angry; Mr. Beanson puzzled; and both were silent. If he had seen a possible chance of securing his first brief in any other way, Mr. Archibald Beanson would most certainly have dismissed Sophia instantler. Running his long fingers inanely through his red hair, "Madam!" he said, at last, "I think I shall be obliged to consult 'Bishop on Marriage.'"

"Now look here, sir," observed Miss Sophia, wrapping her ready-made cloak tighter around her, "if you keep on, I shall lose my patience and my good manners. Who in the world wants to consult the bishop on marriage? An ordinary minister, or even a justice of the peace will do me. I am not proud, sir."

Mr. Beanson, trying to look learned, succeeded in looking confused. Undoubling himself again — this time with abstruse deliberation — he went to a meagre book case and returned to his desk. "It was this book," said he, "that I had reference to — 'Bishop on Marriage and Divorce!'"

"Well, now you begin to get sensible," remarked Miss Garr, in a tone and manner which, expressed in words, would have read, "I grant your pardon, sir, for your trivial mistake about ministers and bishops."

Mr. Beanson opened the book, and, glancing over the table of contents, his eye rested on the heading of a chapter which read thus: "Want of Age." In his utter helplessness, Archibald looked up again at Sophia and asked, —

"Is there any want of age in the parties?"

"Now look here, sir; I did not come here to be insulted. You think I do not understand your irony. I would have you to know that I do."

"I asked that question," said Mr. Beanson soothingly, "with all due reverence for your age. 'This is the first time you have openly acknowledged that you are the plaintiff in the contemplated suit. I have known it all along, however; and I therefore assure you that the question about age was suggested wholly by my ignorance as to the other party — the defendant.'"

Mr. Beanson, without perusing the commentary on this speech, written in the face of his client, now glanced his eye back to the table of contents again. The question suggested this time seemed to that astute pundit an honest one, and based on sufficient grounds: "Want of mental capacity," he read. "That's it!" he exclaimed. "There may be a want of mental capacity in one of the parties. Do you think the defense could make that out?" inquired Mr. Beanson.

"It might be," replied Miss Garr, still pursuing the thought into which she had been drifted, and in which she had gradually drowned some of her indignation at the unsuspecting Archibald. Lang's late conduct may

have been dictated by insanity — proposing to Amelia after engaging himself to her, Sophia Garr! “Really, Mr. Beanson, it might be.”

“Indeed, madam? Then we must guard against that!”

The client looked inquiringly at the lawyer, who was for a moment wrapped in a mute study. “Can the defense, madam,” demanded Mr. Beanson at last, “can — can they prove that you have ever been in Stockton, or any private insane asylum?”

Here the reader who has visited the Sandwich Islands may pause to congratulate himself. Remembering the crater of Mauna Loa, he will have a more vivid idea of Miss Garr’s feelings than anything but that molten sea of lava could possibly suggest. Sophia jumped indignantly to her feet, and poured a tide of epithets, so seething-hot, over the head of the astonished Archibald, that for a moment he succumbed before it, blank and still as some patriarchal porpoise, lava-cooked, and cast upon the beach of Hawaii.

“You wretch!” was the comparatively calm peroration of Miss Garr, “you — you horrid wretch! I have a mind to sue you for slander. How dare you put such a stigma on my character when you know, or ought to know that George Lang is the one that is insane!”

“Oh, ah! George Lang, my employer?” exclaimed Mr. Beanson coming to life. “That’s the gentleman you would prosecute. Well, now!”

To the intense astonishment of Archibald an increasing bitterness of manner succeeded, and he said, “If you are not insane, madam, you are certainly in your dotage. Why, look at this desk here! Every one of these papers

is a deed made out by order of the gentleman you would rob. Go along with your breach of promise ! The court would send you to an asylum as sure as guns ! ”

Mr. Beanson's face grew brighter as his indignation grew ; and his entire head was girt about with an unwonted appearance of youth. Sophia's rough handling, like sand-paper upon an antique bust, had rubbed some of the yellow mould away — had lifted that mysterious veil woven by the semblance of years, and had opened up to her eyes and ours, the perfect glories of Mr. Beanson's Golden Age.

“ You came here, no doubt, madam,” continued Archibald, with no such interruption as the foregoing paragraph, “ in fact, I feel sure, madam, you came here to prevail on me to enter into a plot against my only present employer, and may be (here Mr. Beanson was very bitter in the curl of his lip and his general tone), may be ? — no, I am sure, too, that you would attempt to marry me, at last, as a meet punishment for being your accomplice. Oh ! I see it in your eye, madam ; you need not deny it ! ”

Miss Garr, at one time or another, since she had read Mr. Beanson's name on his card, might have thought vaguely of “ prospecting ” him for a husband, in case of the failure of all other claims ; but to do her justice, it was only ineffable rage that Archibald saw in her eye, as he repeated — though Sophia had not attempted to speak — “ You need not deny it, for I tell you I see it in your eye ! and as for Mr. Lang, I am doing his notary business and a great deal of it, too, especially of late. He is selling hosts of property — hosts of property, madam, in the name and with the written consent of the Claytons. Why, the very heaviest sale is to

be made to-day. Now what does this mutual confidence presuppose? Madam," said Mr. Beanson, rising and assuming an air of mock politeness, "if you were as sure that you are sane, as I am that he is going to marry the daughter of Mrs. Clayton, you would not have taken up so much of my valuable time from Mr. Lang's business. But, madam, this is the door," concluded Mr. Beanson with an urbane wave of the hand, as he resumed his seat and began silently to arrange the papers before him.

Miss Sophia, white with rage, did not stir or speak.

Involuntarily the hands of Mr. Beanson paused in the labors they had undertaken, and fell heavily, one on each side of his chair, almost to the floor. As he sat and gazed at the still shape before him, the idea of the ghost in Hamlet was suddenly suggested to the fertile mind of Mr. Beanson. This was not a remarkable conception, taken apart from its consequences; yet Mr. Beanson, forgetting the matter of gender, not only congratulated himself on the aptness of the allusion, though not expressed in words, but actually chuckled, and at last, laughed outright, as an encouragement to his own genius.

Had it not been for this fatal laugh, Miss Garr could have spoken, and her speech might have been terrible. But something came perversely up into her throat. Turning briskly upon her heel she darted through the door to be in advance of her own tears; and she and the first brief of Mr. Archibald Beanson disappeared together.

"I hope," mused that gentleman to himself as he put his pen-holder between his teeth and leaned back in his chair, recurring to his happy allusion to Shakespeare, "I

hope *it* (meaning his first brief) will never come to me again 'in such a questionable shape!'"

Mr. Beanson laughed louder than before at this meteor flash of intellect, and modestly resumed his writing.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GALA AFTERNOON.

FIRST the sun arose, and then the baker's wife, at North Beach. The sun was bright and golden; the baker's wife somewhat obscured by a cloud of curl-papers. "This is Saturday," she said; "I must get about my work early, to be in time for the promenade;" and she began by a vigorous exercise of the broom, while the baker slept on. They had no children living. The baker had come to consider this early dust, on Saturday morning, as a matter of course, and compromised by having his head shampooed every Saturday noon.

The sun had been up an hour, when the widow lady of perennial youth, who keeps a fashionable boarding-house on Mission Street, called to her two daughters, in the adjoining room, and threatened them, if they did not march right down stairs "this instant," and help the Chinaman get breakfast, they should not go a step on Montgomery Street "this blessed day."

The sun had been up two hours when the pretty little school-mistress, who wishes she could find a boarding-house where the men are not all so common and unromantic, turned on her pillow, and thought how stupid it was that breakfast was all over; and yawned and exclaimed to herself—"Well, well, this is Saturday. I must get up, or my new dress will not be finished in time for the afternoon promenade."

The sun had been up three hours, when a brevet major and a second lieutenant of the Regulars crawled over each other on to the carpet of a fifth story room in the Occidental Hotel. "Blast that last drink," said one; "it has got cross-ways in my head."

"Blast these green-backs," rejoined the other. "A man can't live on his pay out here! How am I going to do for gloves this afternoon? There isn't a pair here that I haven't worn on the promenade."

The sun had been up four hours, when a maid-servant knocked at the chamber door of the aristocratic Mrs. Leadbetter of Rincon Hill.

"What on earth is the matter, now? I'll have you horsewhipped and sent away as soon as I awake," said that estimable lady, as the girl entered.

"I have brought your breakfast, ma'am."

"But what right have you to come here at this unseasonable hour, and spoil my sleep?"

"I have done just as you told me, ma'am; you" —

"You impudent hussy! did I tell" —

"It is eleven o'clock, Mrs. Leadbetter, and Saturday."

"Saturday, Jane? Did you say Saturday?" asked Mrs. Leadbetter, sitting up in bed. "Well, Jane, I will pardon you. You may have that old silk skirt I promised you, if you wish to go on Montgomery Street this afternoon."

The sun had been up five hours, when a well-dressed negro made the hasty circuit of a long hall, in a certain gilded house, and tapped respectfully at several doors. Then there was a sudden tumult of busy preparation in the mirrored rooms. Powder, rouge, and crimping-irons wrought the labors of their bondage to the queens of that godless Egypt. For the well-dressed negro, in making his round, had said sonorously —

• “Twelve o’clock, ladies; Saturday!”

These “ladies” were aware that the afternoon promenade was their best advertisement.

The sun had been up six hours, and now seemed to stand still, right over Montgomery Street. The sky was cloudless — a dome too vast for ornament. The hall for the festival was ready, only the revelers had not yet come. A few brokers and speculators were grouped about the corners, as if inspecting the scene of the future carnival — a fancy, by the way, not inappropriate; since their money had contributed largely to the splendid millinery of the display which soon should float by those same corners.

The world was at lunch.

While the banker’s clerk lingered over his fish chowder, his thoughts were at sea. A thronged Montgomery Street seemed to go straight across the beef a la mode on the plate of the Front Street salesman. Both were pining for three o’clock to come, when their establishments should close.

The exquisite young lady of South Park saw stereoscopic views of the Mercantile Library in her cup of tea, for it was from that learned, trysting place she was to commence her promenade with a young gentleman just from New York, whose parents were undoubtedly wealthy.

The world was especially at lunch, at the Lick House. Luncheon was also served on Bush Street Hill, and Harrison Hill, and the subject of dresses and carriages was discussed and decided upon at all those places, amid the languors of biscuits and preserves.

“Amelia,” said Mrs. Clayton, moving away from the table, “Amelia, will you ride out with me this afternoon?”

"I think I will," replied the young lady, a little sadly, "I want to see the crowd."

"Never heard one man called a crowd before!" was the remark Miss Garr would have made, if she had then been left suddenly alone with her old friend from the State of Maine. "If you have no objection, ladies," — this is what Sophia really did say — "I should like to accompany you. I am so weak and nervous that I cannot walk to-day; and I should also like to look upon the crowd."

"Well, well," rejoined Mrs. Clayton, with gracious condescension, "I suppose we can all go. Yes, yes, we will go."

The next two hours were a period of transition, the sun yet apparently standing still upon the fashionable Gibeon. An occasional gorgeous toilet swept by, but on the sublime mission of mingling the real with the ideal — namely, shopping with display. A half hour later, on Montgomery Street, and the ideal swallows up the real. Display is all in all.

And that half hour had finally arrived. The gilding, and the exhausted air, and the real gold of the alloyed drama, and the water-color glories of the afternoon theatres were deserted, and their human garniture strewn upon Montgomery Street. The spectators had mingled with the actors in a larger scene.

Young ladies, with old faces; old faces, with young dresses; the rich in poor attire; the poor, in rich attire; young gentlemen the *backs* of whose heads were intellectual and ornate; middle-aged gentlemen, from whose heads the hair had been worn away in covering sins; overgrown school-girls, in short dresses, because their

mothers wore short dresses at their ages, and cannot understand why climate should break in on old customs; all these, and hundreds more, few saints, and many sinners, passed and repassed one another, on this occidental Corso. The weekly carnival was at its height. The gilding, and the exhausted air, and the real gold, and the water-color glories of our poor humanity were grouped and marshaled for the spectacle, and the angels, let us hope, were the pitying spectators.

Just as the two young ladies, whose mother keeps the fashionable boarding-house, had bowed smilingly to the major and second lieutenant, who lodge in the fifth story of the elegant hotel — the clash of gongs and the roll of muffled drums jostled harshly against the air. The smiles of the officers were syncopated by a sudden expression of alarm. Then a wild bugle note rose out of the gathering darkness of the sounds, like a rocket, and burst forth and was lost in the blare of a hundred instruments.

“Oh, a funeral!” exclaimed the major, directing his attention to his glove, which had come unclasped in his unwonted emotion.

“Yes, a musician’s funeral. You can tell by the number of the instruments. That’s the way they always turn out. But here she comes; we must do this thing elegantly, you know, old fellow.” And the two, raising their hats to a lady of very questionable reputation, passed on.

The procession was just turning into Montgomery Street. First came the musicians, with crape upon their arms, keeping slow time to their own music; next the hearse, through whose glass sides a silver-mounted coffin could be seen; then, a carriage, occupied by two persons of our acquaintance — Frau Carpenter on the back seat,

and, on the front, a gentleman whose face was not discerned from without. It was not pride, however, that had caused Amos to draw the curtain. There is no caste in kindliness of heart. Grief had made equals of the two chief mourners.

The next carriage was occupied by the portly form of Mr. Andrew Gloverson, alone. That gentleman's infallible judgment had led him to discover something wrong with his faithful cashier, inasmuch as Dixon had not been at the counting-house in two days. So Mr. Gloverson had hunted him up, and, being made acquainted with as many of the circumstances (all names but Karl's omitted), as Amos had thought honorable to reveal, the good old merchant had insisted on sharing in the ceremony and in the expenses of the funeral.

A train of empty carriages followed to bring the musicians back from the cemetery.

As the procession pursued its way down the crowded street, the grand music of the funeral march breaking in upon the talk and laughter of the gay promenaders — Death eloquent, Life buoyant — it was as the meeting of two currents; and many a heart was caught and whirled about in the silent eddies between them.

The baker's wife, of North Beach, paused and looked away from the gaudy trimmings of her cloak, and away from the hearse and the coffin, somewhere out into vacancy toward the sky. She was thinking of her dead first-born.

For, if the wail of the gongs and the subdued thunder of the muffled drums were fraught with awe and warning, the sublime theme of the music that floated magnificently above all, was full of the mystery, and the majesty, and the hope of Death.

Two inmates of the gilded house, whose faces had been singing the *Io triumphe* of paint and powder, all the way from Market Street, caught each other by the arm convulsively, beneath their costly furs. There came a color in the cheek of one, and a pallor in that of the other, which had never been bought or sold. It was the honest handiwork of their own sore hearts, bowed, for a moment, before the King of Terrors. One thought of the dead man who had wronged her, and the other of the dead man she had wronged.

Two newspaper reporters, standing in the wake of the music, as it were, for they did not speak till the procession had fairly passed, carried on the following laconic dialogue: —

“One of the Philharmonic Society, I suppose?”

“Ye-es!”

“What name?”

“Don’t know. Heard it, too; something Dutch, I believe!”

First reporter, putting up his note-book. “Well, it’s hardly worth while. These things are getting too common for a good item.”

“You are right. Would to —, that somebody would murder somebody! Verily I must have Irish blood in my veins.”

“What, are you spoiling for a fight? Get up one, then, and a sensation item at the same time!”

“No, no; I mean a funeral always makes me thirsty.”

“Oh, ah! Then let’s take a drink!”

Exeunt reporters up a side street.

Mrs. Leadbetter, and the little school-mistress, in search

of a sentimental boarding-house, passed each other and the coffin simultaneously. Whereupon Mrs. Leadbetter divided her thoughts between a sneer at the new dress of the little school-mistress, and a speculation as to when she herself should have the satisfaction of following the coffin of Mr. Leadbetter, her liege lord. The little school-mistress, touched by the extraordinary number of the instruments, had been musing, and wondering what high-sounding name, in the bright hereafter, would be graven upon her own tomb-stone, till the richness of Mrs. Leadbetter's attire swallowed up the whole soul of the little school-mistress, in admiration and envy of the living present.

The vehicles in the street drew respectfully aside to make way for the sad, beautiful pageant. Among others was the Clayton carriage.

"What under the sun is the matter, now?" demanded Mrs. Clayton.

"It's jist a fun'ral, ma'am!" was the coachman's soothing answer to his mistress.

"How shocking!" emitted Miss Garr, with a shudder, which may have been genuine.

"What magnificent music!" Amelia exclaimed. "I wonder who is dead."

"Oh! it's only a musician," rejoined Miss Sophia, quietly resuming her usual stiff position in the carriage.

"Only a musician?" repeated Amelia as her eyes kindled. "Only an artist of one of the highest arts! What a glorious thing it is to be buried like a musician! Do you see that host of instruments? Where is the great man who has such a funeral? For my part I am glad I live in a city where the poor musician has, at least, one ovation on earth, in the richest and grandest

of burials — where Music herself comes forward to vindicate her own votary — over his corpse speaks boldly and magnificently of some of the solitary consolations of his life. This makes the musician's funeral a march of triumph, and the greatest triumph of all."

During this rather excited speech, Miss Sophia's position on the seat grew stiffer than ever. That was Miss Sophia's only reply. Mrs. Clayton had observed the peculiar lights in her daughter's eyes, and Mrs. Clayton remembered, too, that slumbering behind them as bivouacs, were the forces which had dealt her countless defeats. She therefore looked out of the carriage window in silence. And now the three sat listening to the wailing and the sharp pain of the instruments; and the grand swell of the theme, always coming after, and collecting all into glorious harmony.

"Mother," said Amelia, after the procession had passed.

"What, my child?"

"Will you have the carriage follow after them, as far as Market Street, at least?"

"Why, my child? Why not go home by way of Kearny Street?"

"I don't know; only I feel as if I *must* hear more of this music."

The coachman was accordingly ordered to keep behind the empty carriages; and thus, unconsciously, Amelia Clayton formed one of the funeral procession which was bearing Karl Schmerling slowly toward the grave.

Finally, the carnival was left behind. Death was no longer represented in the open-air masquerade, but the carnival and masquerade went on, gayer for the interrup-

tion. At Third Street, the carriage of the Claytons turned homeward. As the music died away in the distance, it seemed to Amelia to have drifted into certain melancholy bars from the "Song of Friendship."

She knew, however, that this was a mere fancy, and explained it away quite naturally. At her own request, her mother had learned from Lang how fruitless had been his search for his missing friend, the morning after the eventful walk on Kearny Street. Now Karl had been a member of the Philharmonic Society, and a subscriber to the musical fund. So, evidently, had been this unknown musician. How, Amelia asked of herself, could she, under the circumstances, help thinking of poor Mr. Schmerling and his song?

So, arriving home, Amelia sat down alone by the piano, and played and sung the "Song of Friendship" from beginning to end.

The sun was sinking slowly into the Pacific, its last rays lingering aslant, on the new-made grave at Lone Mountain, as the farewell dirge was played. It so happened that George Lang, coming in rather late from his drive to the Cliff, heard the music as he passed, and, the better to listen, slackened the speed of the new, blooded horse he had seen fit to buy, since Karl had disappeared.

After listening awhile, Lang said to himself, "What makes that music so gloomy? Why does it set me to thinking of that dreamer? O bosh!" whipping up his horse; "it's just because I am later than usual to dinner. Many a fellow, before me, has thought himself sad when he was only hungry!" And the broker's stylish "Brewster" disappeared.

The dirge, just at its close, burst into a grand swell,

and soared aloft in a haze of sound, which seemed not so much a reflection as a part of the purple sunset. Then the last echoes died away in the surrounding hills; but the purple of the sunset remained, as if the music had been caught up by the angels, and prolonged through the skies.

Thus Karl was buried. Poor Karl! betrayed because, forsooth, his trust was too great, and his soul too fine. Yet, had he not been so fine-souled, Art would never have revealed her divinity to him, and spoken in him, and through him, and triumphed, even in his death; and Nature would never have glassed herself in him, to see herself twofold — the form and spirit eidolon. The good may suffer, and *we* may not see the retribution on the wicked; yet who shall say that the music which went out toward the sea and the setting sun was not, in reality, caught up, and prolonged with ineffable sweetness, by the seraphim about the throne of eternal Justice?

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERIORS OF TWO MINDS.

ABOUT a week had elapsed, when Amos Dixon found himself, in the early dusk of evening, walking along Second Street, toward Folsom. He could not have told why he took that way home. It did not seem to make much difference, however; no street looked natural to him any more. The coaches and carriages ranged themselves into melancholy funeral processions before him, and when he looked closer, to convince himself of the unreasonableness of his fancy, the scornful and indignant face of Amelia Clayton looked out upon him from the panels of the omnibuses and street-cars.

It is true he had learned from the doctor that Amelia could not have arrived in time to see Karl alive; that Karl was probably dying when he (Amos) left the room; and that the doctor had not expected Karl to live. Amelia's presence, then, could not have saved him.

This was a mountain raised from Dixon's mind — only to be replaced by another nearly as crushing. He could now dwell almost exclusively on his rebuff at Mrs. Clayton's. He still had the little package Karl had left for Amelia, and he believed he was doing wrong not to send it to her; yet he clung to it as the only hope of ever gaining her presence again. He was determined to see her long enough to apologize for the rudeness with which he had searched her house; somehow, hoping against

hope, that for Karl's sake, she would forgive him at least that. This was his excuse for carrying the package always about with him. When he should part with that, he must part with the idea of Amelia Clayton. He never thought of this, however, without sighing, and adding to himself that it was hard always to be a *man*.

Then he would add a mental amendment, that it was not necessary to forget her wholly, and he would end by assuring himself that it could not be wrong to retain a grateful memory — and to bless it — of the good she had done, in beckoning him higher up the steeps of manhood. This would lead him to think of Karl's hopeful fancy of the sunshine coming earliest to the mountain and lingering there the longest. Then he would remember that this was merely a fancy — only of an opposite nature to the one that, in his own troubled mind, turned the vehicles of the street into hearses, and the painted portraits into angry and indignant Amelias. Summing up all, he would invariably come to the single conclusion, at last, that he was altogether miserable.

As Amos walked along Second Street, on the early evening in question, he had gone through this line of thought once — even to the end, and commencing again, had just arrived at the sunshine on the mountain of Karl's fancy — when he suddenly espied George Lang on the opposite side of the way, going in the same direction, and evidently observing him.

The intermediate links to the miserable conclusion were jumped over at once. There was something, however, mingled in his misery, this time, that Amos did not recollect ever having experienced before. "That man," thought Dixon, "is going to Folsom Street, and he does not bow, though I am sure he sees me. Well, I suppose

he has a right to go there as her accepted. But then ought he to be her accepted? He is a villain, and she ought to know it. If some one would only tell her! She of course would not believe me, or an anonymous warning. She is too high-minded! And I should be more contemptible in her eyes and my own, for my pains. Still, I suppose I have the only proof of his villainy: the papers of Karl. What shall I do — what shall I do? Shall I show her the proofs, and then positively refuse to marry her, myself — or I mean, warn her, when I see her, and tell her that I am not the only man in the world — though I sometimes wish, for her sake — no, my sake — that I was: so, she needs not necessarily marry me if she does not marry him. But she would in any case think me a selfish if not a conceited fool, and, may be, she would be right. Somehow, I never can think straight about her. If she were only a man, for about half an hour, I would get through everything. Then, after all, what a blessing it is for her — no, for me, — that she is not a man. Yes, Lang is certainly going to Folsom Street. He sees me, and does not bow. Feeling as I do, it would not be honest to bow first, and — *I will not!*”

George Lang was strolling down Second Street, smoking his post-prandial cigar. Since Amelia had rejected him, his digestion had seemed to require more claret for dinner than it had ever before been his custom to drink. He had just partaken of two entire bottles of Chateau Léoville, which had indeed, come greatly to the aid of his mental digestion also. There was a strange gleam about his thoughts which he mistook for a healthy cheerfulness. It must have been a reflection from the wine, for he did not always look so hopefully upon some of his

schemes. In this borrowed light, then, George Lang was ruminating on divers matters important to himself, and, if the truth must be told, vitally important to others — when, ugh! he discovered Amos on the opposite side of the way. “Is that fellow going to Clayton’s?” was his first thought. “I must not meet this man so much. There is something tickling my blood — there! my nails have cut into my palm! He is not worth drawing blood for — at least, on myself. But can he be going to Folsom Street? Mrs. Clayton has promised me he shall not enter her house again, and says she has, conformably to my wishes, ordered him away, once, though he almost frightened her to death. She is sure, however, that Amelia does not love him. Well, I am not so sure. I am certain, though, *I* never could have loved her if she had not refused me. We always want what we cannot get — but can’t I get her? *I will!* Though she is evidently unworthy of me; she doesn’t appreciate me. Then, do I love her, or her money? Come, this is weakness. The money is all — at least, I shall soon know. Well there! he has gone past Folsom Street. I believe I should have murdered him, if he had started to go in there; and somehow, I feel like murdering him for disappointing me; for I really believed he would attempt it. I will turn down here into Folsom Street, and he will have the pleasure of thinking that I go there. By the way, I will just see where he *is* going — without being observed. The fellow may be trying to deceive me; or he may — now may he? — have a meeting somewhere with Amelia. I may get a chance to give him the benefit of an unseen brick, for I feel this tingling, here and here. I wonder, by the by, if the blood is the vital principle — the locus of the soul. Does the blood think?

Now, if his were spilt, death would follow, of course, and then, and then — why he would be out of my way — ah! he has turned.”

Here Lang threw his cigar away distastefully. “It is that infernal weed that excites my blood so! The idea of a man of my principle thinking of murder, and that a clandestine one, all merely because I have been disappointed! Liquor has a strange effect on me of late. Now I drank very little before dinner. What folly, what madness to put my own neck in peril, by breaking Dixon’s — when a sweeter vengeance can be taken by triumphing over him as I shall triumph over him at last. Well, I shall be more cool now, and follow him up, surer not to be seen.”

Amos suddenly turned again, and made a slight detour in a small street which seemed to be taking him back whence he came.

Lang stopped short, and turned deathly white. “I will kill him if he does! But what has become of my presence of mind? I must do nothing rash; but if he goes to that house, and Mrs. Clayton calls for help, as she has promised to do, money,” — rubbing his finger-ends convulsively against his thumb — “money, heaps of money, and the law, under the circumstances — burglary, kidnapping, or something of the sort — will certainly clear me!”

This detour soon brought Dixon to the corner of his own little street. Here he paused. “It is dark again,” thought Amos — “yet so early to go to my room;” and he stood looking sadly in the direction of the elegant house.

Lang stopped again, and moved into the shadow of a building. “I suppose it must be done,” was the sad-des-

perate expression of his eyes, as they wandered for a moment from the unconscious object he was watching, and dwelt on the house beside him, to see whether he himself were observed. There was no light in the front room, but he could hear voices of children in the back apartments. No, he was not observed. Just, however, as he was about to direct his attention again to Amos, something lying across the door-step caught his eye. He drew a little nearer : then, he trembled.

Reader, it was nothing that would have alarmed you, whatever your age, or sex. It was only a club — a ball-club, probably forgotten there by some juvenile inmate of the house.

Yet George Lang trembled. “Who could have left that here for me?” he asked of himself. “Certainly Fate, for an object!” — he seized it hurriedly, and with something like a shudder — “Fate, or may be, the — the devil!” And he again riveted his gaze upon Dixon, who was yet on the corner, in evident indecision.

“Would it be any harm to walk past Amelia’s, just once?” continued Amos to himself, still looking wistfully, toward the elegant house. “It will be so dark that no one will see me. No, it would be sentimental, and unmanly too : because, especially because she would not like it !”

So Amos walked on, in the direction of his little room.

Lang experienced a sense of relief, and, as he followed at a distance, his thoughts ran something in this manner : “No, this club is not a cowardly weapon, because, on the whole, I don’t want to kill the fellow — only lay him up for a while. A month ago, no one could have convinced me that I would carry this club, or think of using it on any one. But this *disappointment* — that’s just the

word — disappointment, all on his account, has put my mind into an abnormal state. This” — swinging the club — “is the strongest proof that I am not in love with her. The tender passion always deals in pistols and rapiers. Such weapons, however, it would be fairly transcendental to use, when one feels as I do towards him.”

Amos had not gone a block before he stopped again, and stood leaning over a picket fence, looking into a little front yard.

“What can this man mean?” asked Lang, as he stopped too. “Does he know that I am following him, and is he leading me a wild goose chase, for his own amusement? Or, what don’t I suspect lately? I believe I have to-night even entertained the idea that Amelia would consent to a clandestine meeting with any one, let alone that fellow. I should have known better, for, curse her dignity, I believe that’s what stands in my way more than anything else. She does not believe I love her — but then what can the lout be gawking at there? Most men, and all women, are downright fools when they are in love. Now, what an idiotic thought just crossed *my* mind! That house, the place where they are to meet, or carry on some sort of communication! Surely I am not in love, but I am becoming a fool, as fast as if I were — anything more than disappointed. Amelia may be in love with him, though, and that may be the house! No, any one of the sex but Amelia! There, he is gone on. Let me see, let me see. The house is evidently unoccupied. Well, what next?”

It was the little brown house, that Amos had been looking at — the little brown house in whose window the placard “To Let” was still visible. He was thinking of poor old Auntie Owen; and, wondering what had become

of her, he had resolved that it was his duty to know. Could a secret murder ever have been meditated, or done in his own little street? And Amos had shuddered involuntarily. "The night must be getting colder," he thought, as he had buttoned up his coat, and walked on.

Arriving at his little room, at last, Amos lit a light, and sitting at his table before the window, he took out the packet that Karl had given him. Regarding the seal-ring a moment, he put it back with the few papers — worthless shares in the "Dorcas" mine — which had accompanied it. Then, he took out the little paper box, with Amelia's name on it, and with the seal, that Karl's dying hand had placed upon it, still unbroken. Amos gazed on it, and gazed on it, blessing it for the hope it contained. She would listen to him long enough, at least, to hear his apology, and of Karl's last moments. "A little thing," he thought, "to contain so much comfort!" Suddenly Amos kissed the little box, and then, startled by what he had done, looked up, and found that he had forgotten to draw down the window-curtain, which he now proceeded hurriedly to do.

From his position on the sidewalk, in the still little street, Lang had seen these movements. His surmises thereat were villainous, and his thoughts terrible. "The fellow has met her, or will go out to meet her! If he comes out, he is a dead man!" And Lang watched, and waited, and strolled about the quiet street, so as to escape suspicion of the few passers-by, keeping his eye constantly on the light at the window.

About ten o'clock, the light disappeared.

"Now," said Lang, in an actual whisper, "now for him! A sure stroke, and there will be no noise about it." Grasping his club tightly, Lang crouched himself behind

a shrub that grew by the gate, thoroughly concealing him from within and without.

Here he waited, and listened, till his knees ached with their severe cramping. "Confound the fellow, will he disappoint me after all?" he muttered as the night grew quieter, and the hour later. And still he waited on, but Dixon did not come.

Before Lang had turned, with a curse, to leave the scene, Amos, after a little troubled wakefulness, was fast asleep in his little bed, dreaming of Amelia.

CHAPTER XXVII.

STOCKS.

THE confidential understanding between Mrs. Clayton and Lang had been rather strengthened than weakened by late events. The broker may have had too much pride or too little courage often to visit the elegant house; and besides, it was now the busiest time ever known at his office. At any rate, Mr. Nelson Shallop, his crisp little mentor, was very frequently seen going and coming on Folsom Street.

Miss Sophia Garr, learning who Mr. Shallop was, smiled graciously upon that gentleman on the occasion of his second visit, and prevailed upon him to carry the following "note" to his employer. Unfortunately, the perfume with which it was laden cannot be conveyed to the reader. You have, however, the full benefit of her copious underlinings, and of her elegant monogram:—



"Wednesday Noon.

"MON CHERE GEORGE,— *Why* do you not come and see me, *my own* dearest? I forgive your foolish faithlessness in proposing to Amelia after being accepted by *me*, and I think you

were very properly rebuffed, which illustrates what weak instruments *Providence* takes to defend *the injured*. I do not see what I would do if it were not for Providence. But if you do not feel like coming here just now, why, *pray do write* me and send by Mr. Shallop, your *ugly* little clerk.

"Now, you know, my best beloved, that Amelia is bent on having that fool Dixon. It was scarcely a week ago that she ran off with him in a carriage; and now positively denies ever having seen him, when I actually saw the carriage disappear with her in it *with my own eyes*. I am sure I am shocked enough, and I trust you will not say a word about it, for you know what *scandal* is, and I love Amelia so much. I say, for my part, let her marry him and done with it.

"By the way, now that I am on the subject, my dear, dear George, it seems to be the *manifest destiny* of women to marry, more or less, but then I am *no fatalist*, and Amelia can take care of herself. I have been too strictly brought up for such errors, for I think I told you I was educated at an *eminent female seminary* in the State of Maine, because I do not see that they (I mean *we poor women*) all accomplish our destiny. Yet why this repining? Have I forgotten your promise on that blissful evening when at the door? (*Oh! how I blush!*) Yet I try to remember that blissful eve with liveliest emotions of regard, forgetting *what has happened since, my love*. Dear George, I leave to you the appointment of the happy day. I feel that I am your equal only *in the matter of the heart*, and that though my *intellect* is not as *strong* as *yours*, I am sure I have a *feeling one*. I shall die if you do not write and tell *when*, 'when we shall meet to part no more.' Eternally yours, SOPHIA."

"That," said Miss Garr to herself when her messenger had gone, "that will make me out a breach of promise case, in spite of the wretch Beanson." She had already attempted in conversation to draw Lang out before others into something compromising, but in vain. This was her last effort, and "high hope" went with it.

When, however, the next day, Mr. Shallop returned, saying for Mr. Lang that there was no answer, she became very red, and then very yellow in the face, as she almost whispered: "No answer? Did you see him when he read it?"

"Yes, ma'am!" answered Mr. Shallop, in his quick way.

"What did he say or do when he read it?"

"Nothing — only swore, then laughed, an' tore it up!"

Miss Garr disappeared to the penetralia of her own apartment, and was seen no more that afternoon.

The next day Mr. Shallop did not happen to come, but the day after he was closeted with Mrs. Clayton, when Miss Garr managed to intrude herself. The business of the first two being over, Miss Garr seemed to be stricken with a sudden interest in stocks, and said that she did not know but she would invest two or three thousand dollars of her own little savings. Whereupon there was something like a red light shot from the bright little eyes of Mr. Nelson Shallop. "She has money, too, has she?" thought the vivid Nelson.

"He has bitten at my new bait," thought the Garr. "I will buy a husband, at last, and without paying a cent." For let it be remembered that Miss Garr's mania did not extend to her money matters, in which she was shrewdness itself. Among her own dollars and cents she allowed no play of imagination.

It was remarkable what a sudden interest sprung up between Mr. Shallop and Miss Garr. They had not talked long before Miss Garr was confirmed in her belief, that as brisk and sharp a little man as the new "claim" she was "prospecting," could not be without money of his own. Strange to say, Miss Garr was right, though she

had nothing to consult but her own eyes and ears, and the odd brains situate somewhere between them. She merely used the shrewd philosophy which the love of money develops sometimes in the weakest of mortals, putting the horse-jockey, often, for a half hour, on an equality with the greatest diplomat.

So, by the very next steamer, Miss Garr wrote to the State of Maine that she now had "some one to love." This announcement somewhat astonished an old friend of hers, to whom it was sent — a maiden, as well as a misanthrope, who had not heard from Miss Garr in years, and who, for that matter, did not care to hear from her in several years to come. But since the late acquisition of paper, stamped with her own imposing initials, Miss Sophia had taken largely to epistolary correspondence.

Why a broker's clerk was so often seen going into an aristocratic mansion like Mrs. Clayton's was a matter which, at that time, would have needed not even the slightest explanation. Any intelligent passer-by would have looked upon that house as peculiarly blessed. The nervous contraction of the dry wrinkles on Mr. Shallop's face, which he intended for a smile, would then and there have been mistaken for the smile of fortune. For the great stock excitement was at its height.

Apothecaries' clerks were achieving opulence in a single day. School-boys on the street corners were talking the geology of gold. Gray-haired men were abandoning the old sluggish currents of industry, and renewing their youth at fountains of waste-paper. Merchants and tradesmen invested the earnings of years in mining companies that had large "names," and long ones, but nothing like "a local habitation." Physicians deserted the

sick and dying for "promising shares." Lawyers fled from the courts to exert their eloquence on "bulls" and "bears." Draymen and chamber-maids speculated with their savings. Clergymen bartered their salaries away with the money-changers, instead of driving them from the temple. Fair women came down from their carpeted alcoves, and walked in the mire of stocks. Lips that were shaped for tender utterances, said nothing the whole day but the hardest kind of words — "quartz rock," "lodes," "ores," and "outcroppings." Shops and parlors were full of "specimens." The old myth of the Gorgon was partially reversed: well nigh everything men looked upon was turned to gold-bearing stone.

Probably the world has never witnessed a parallel. The Law scheme of France was comparatively reasonable. Mr. Andrew Gloverson was not the only substantial merchant on Front Street who bought shares and paid assessments. Did not Mrs. Leadbetter make twenty thousand dollars in one forenoon? In the excitement, even Mr. Archibald Beanson forgot his first brief. With the only ten dollars he could command, he bought one share in the famous "Epaminondas Gold, Silver, and Copper Mining Company; capital stock \$750,000!"

On one occasion Mr. Beanson lived on one meal a day for a month, so as to pay his assessments — which latter privilege proved all the benefit that he ever reaped from his speculation.

As this is an important matter in Mr. Beanson's history, it is deemed proper to state all that is known about it without further delay; though the result be a sacrifice of the chronicler's skill to a love of truth.

After the bubble burst, Mr. Beanson's account stood thus: —

Cash	paid	for	one	share	in	Epaminondas	Gold,	Silver,	and	Copper	Mining	Company.	.	\$10	00
"	"	"	assessment			May	1st							\$5	00
"	"	"	"			June	"							20	00
"	"	"	"			July	"							15	00
"	"	"	"			August	"							20	00

Total assessments \$60 00

Value of stock in E. G. S. & C. M. Co., Sept. 1st . . \$0 00

In a ledger which Mr. Beanson bought, in anticipation of his great wealth, there stand at the present day the following brief, though not very technical entries :—

Epaminondas G. S. & C. M'g Co.

Dr.	.	.	\$70	00	Cr.	.	.	\$0	00
-----	---	---	------	----	-----	---	---	-----	----

It is not to be understood that there were not some good mines among these thousands, or that the majority of the people interested in the bad ones were anything worse than honest dupes. The effect of the excitement, however, was to raise the stock of the good mines to prices a hundred times as high as the dividends paid would warrant. Suddenly the "Green Lion" would take a fall, and fortunes would slip away in silence. The next week the "Jones and Robinson" would go up fifty per cent., and the same fortunes would come back again with the tide. The loss or gain of a fortune got to be a thing so common, that the quid nuncs hardly thought it worth gossiping about; and the losers or gainers got to pocketing their losses or gains with almost equal equanimity. None lost without hope, or indeed hoped without loss.

It was only the week after the date of Miss Garr's "note" to Mr. Lang, that Nelson Shallop was ushered

into Mrs. Clayton's parlor, as he said, on *very* important business.

"Ah! shall I retire, then?" simpered Miss Garr, who made it a point now invariably to be present when Mr. Shallop called.

"Not in the least," quoth Nelson, whose attempts at gallantry were not always as successful as his stock operations. Politeness and love-making, in fact, were a new business to him; and, as they were in his estimation nothing *but* business, he had undertaken to master them in the same systematic way as he would have undertaken to master a new species of "Double Entry."

If Miss Garr should "not in the least" "retire," what could she do but work at her tatting, and listen to the low music Amelia was making to herself at the piano in the farther end of the large parlor?

"Mr. Lang," continued Mr. Shallop, in his quick, nervous way, "told me to break it to you gently, Mrs. Clayton."

"What — is it good news?"

Nelson shook his head. "Worst kind, ma'am!"

Amelia quitted the piano and hastened to the side of her mother, whose face was bloodless.

"What is it? What is it? My d— my friend, Mr. Shallop," asked Miss Garr, the only one of the ladies who could speak.

"All's lost! 'Jones and Robinson' fell a hundred per cent. yesterday afternoon. This house is no longer yours. Very sorry, 'pon honor. Though you won't have to quit for three months yet. Mr. Lang is nearly ruined, too."

Most of this speech was lost upon Mrs. Clayton and her daughter. Mrs. Clayton fainted first, and Amelia, while endeavoring to afford assistance, fell senseless, with her arms about her mother's neck.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LONE STRUGGLE.

MRS. CLAYTON did not leave her bed for the succeeding two weeks. Mr. Shallop was sent daily to inquire about her, for it seems that Lang was anxious to have an interview, as soon as he could be admitted to her presence.

Miss Garr saw her comfortable home and monthly salary knocked suddenly from under her feet — that was the way she expressed it to herself — and Miss Garr was so angry thereat that she could shed tears at any moment. Miss Garr always did shed tears when Mr. Shallop called; and Miss Garr frequently shed tears and bemoaned her fate for the encouragement of Amelia, who was making every exertion to bear up under the terrible shock.

Apprehension for her mother's life at first absorbed so much of the poor girl's attention, that she had little time to think of the ruin that had fallen upon both like a thunderbolt. When Mrs. Clayton's recovery was no longer despaired of, Amelia began to look about her, and to grasp the reality, and to make some stand against it. She was the better enabled to do this, because she saw that it devolved upon her alone. Strength came to her out of her distrust of Miss Garr, and her mother's utter prostration.

Three days after the sad news had come upon the elegant house, Miss Sophia met the aristocratic Mrs. Lead-

better and told her all. Mrs. Leadbetter intimated that she was very sorry, indeed, "But then," asked she, "what right had a weak woman, like Mrs. Clayton, to dabble in stocks?"

To which Miss Garr rejoined, "What right, indeed!" forgetting that she herself had more than once seconded Lang's moves, in influencing Mrs. Clayton to it.

The next day Amelia, aware of her inexperience, yet forced, as she thought herself, to take everything into her own hands, was on her way to her mother's banker — when she, too, met the aristocratic Mrs. Leadbetter. The meeting was face to face, and Mrs. Leadbetter passed Miss Clayton without the least notice. It was a dead cut, and Amelia felt it. It was painful, only as to feel a sorrowful contempt is painful. Amelia reasoned, as she walked quietly along, that it was undoubtedly best for such a thing to happen just as it did — if such things must happen — for she now felt more resolved than ever to be her own agent. "Mrs. Leadbetter," she thought, "is the world, or, at least, a representative of part of it — that part of it which must be compelled, and not cringed to."

So, at the counter of the bank, where she had expected to become confused and tremble, she did neither, as she demanded and received a statement of Mrs. Clayton's account. When Amelia entered, busy merchants gravely made way for her; and, while she waited, the clerks behind the desks paused in their writing, and, unobserved, stared and admired and worshipped in silence. The business of the great bank was, for a moment, suspended. Such catastrophes, indeed, are liable to come upon the most responsible of financial houses; for, it is feared, the exchange on grace and loveliness will never be fixed.

Now it happened that Mr. Andrew Gloverson — that wicked old bachelor — was just on his way into the back room, to have a little friendly chat with the bank-president, as Amelia turned to go out. Before he left the sidewalk, Mr. Gloverson had removed his hat to wipe the perspiration from the bald spot on the top of his head. On suddenly discovering a lovely apparition approaching in the narrow passage, between the counter and the wall, Mr. Gloverson hustled his portly frame, with precipitate emphasis, against the wall, and presented arms, as it were, with his hat, till Amelia had passed.

“Well,” exclaimed Mr. Gloverson, when she had disappeared, “I’ll be d——! No, I won’t; I won’t swear about such an angel. It isn’t the thing!” — catching his breath, and approaching a chair in the president’s office; then pausing, “Wasn’t she lovely, though! I’ll be — No, no, I won’t. She’s an angel, and I won’t swear about her, I’ll be d——d if I do!” and Mr. Gloverson came down rather heavily into the chair, before which he had been gesticulating.

About an hour later in the day, Mr. Archibald Beanson was startled by a note being handed to him, at his room in Montgomery Block. Mr. Beanson was not only startled, but terrified. This was the month on which he was confining himself to one meal a day. The envelope, which he saw coming toward him, could contain nothing but an unexpected dun — for he did not remember ever to have seen the bearer before — or, what was worse, some sudden assessment on his one share in the “Epaminondas Gold, Silver, and Copper Mining Company.”

Mr. Beanson opened the enclosure, and read a request that he would be pleased to signify to the bearer, when he would call upon Miss Clayton.

John, the coachman, stood respectfully, with his hat in his hand, waiting for his answer, and saw that Mr. Beanson's hand trembled, while he read the note ; and John, who had no favorable opinion of "la-yers," in general, or of any one in particular, whom he supposed to have any hand in the misfortunes of his young mistress, observed, furthermore, that Mr. Beanson changed color when he had finished reading the note.

"Look here, sir !" said Archibald, having considerably exerted his talent at apprehending evil, and looking with much fierceness into the coachman's face. "This is some more of that old hag's breach of promise case. I'll have nothing to do with it. Miss Clayton scarcely knows me at all. Did Miss Clayton write this?"

"If ye call my young misses an auld hag, sur, agen sur, or accuse her of writing a lie, I'll break avery blame bone in yer body, sur, though ye air a la-yer, and have me hanged, sur." The gestures, with which John had delivered the foregoing, were right under Mr. Beanson's nose, and were, to say the least, intensely belligerent.

"Oh ! then Miss Clayton *did* send you — did she?"

"Do I look like a walking, immigratin' lie, sur?"

To tell the truth, it was John's look, taken in connection with his stalwart form, that had caused the apprehensive Archibald to modify his tone.

"I believe, sir," observed Mr. Beanson, mildly, "that you are telling the truth."

"Och ! ye do — do ye ? Well, I say my young misses is not an auld hag, sur. Come, sur, is that the trooth, too?"

"Certainly, sir, by all means."

"Thin ye'd better !" and John, shaking his head, and regarding Mr. Beanson from the corners of his eyes, withdrew to his former position by the door.

"Tell Miss Clayton that I will be there in a half hour's time. That is as soon as my business will allow. By the way, my good fellow," said Archibald, detaining the coachman, who had opened the door, "it was all a mistake of mine. You will of course say nothing more about it to any one. I thought it was the business of that other lady, Miss — Miss, what's her name?"

"Miss Gi-arr, is it?"

"Yes, Miss Garr. Well," —

"Ginerally spaking, sur," interposed John, who wanted to be polite, though firm, "ginerally spaking, sur, I takes it an insult for Miss Amalia to be mistaken for Miss Gi-arr — bad 'cess to the latter."

"Well, I'll be there in half an hour, without fail," resumed Mr. Beanson, blandly; "I suppose it is all right between us now?"

Mr. Beanson's features had, meantime, assumed their customary aged repose.

Seeing which, John replied, "Oh! yes, sur; I feel somehow, sur, as if I'd bin goin' to-strike my father. Ye'll pardon me, I'm sure, sur. I'll say nothing about it, nor would I, sur, if — if, bein' as ye're a la-yer, sur, if — if" —

"Come, come, my good man, out with it! I will do anything in the law line to serve you."

"Couldn't ye then, sur, jist have that auld divil's widow of a Miss Gi-arr hanged, if ye plase?"

"Believe me, my good man, nothing would afford me more pleasure."

Whereupon John approached Mr. Beanson, and clasp-
ing him wildy by the hand, assured him that he had
gained "a friend for life, sur." Then John hastened
back to his mistress, leaving Archibald to attend to that

important business which should engross the next half hour.

The important business aforesaid was nothing more or less than the making of Mr. Beanson's toilet, which Mr. Beanson proceeded to do in the following order: First, he turned his paper collar wrong side out, substituting also a more ample cravat, which should effectually conceal the bosom of his woollen shirt. Having thus changed his linen, he proceeded to sponge his threadbare coat and put it on. Then, a sudden thought struck him, and he began hastily to sew up the lining at the bottoms of his best and only pantaloons. This, of course, necessitated the removal of a certain very important part of Mr. Beanson's attire, not however — with haste and pleasure be it stated — his coat, vest, cravat, and collar. Was it not some German who said that a philosopher is not a philosopher from the waist down? As Mr. Beanson sat thus stitching away, about equally at his own fingers and at the perverse lining of his trousers, his careful toilet terminating well nigh at the natural limits of philosophy — why, Mr. Beanson undoubtedly presented a striking picture; of which, indeed, the merit was not a little enhanced by the modesty with which that astute jurisconsult had draped and concealed the philosopher.

Apprehension of evil was not the talent he was now using. Hope was to him a swift-winged Mercury — no longer the god of thieves. Were not the Claytons ruined? Lang must have refused to make good his marriage engagement. It was the first brief at last (here Mr. Beanson pulled on his trousers). No doubt of that. But then if he should win the case (*Breach of promise; Clayton v. Lang*), who could tell but that he might marry the plaintiff and use the damages recovered to make his first political steps toward the Presidency.

“ Well, there ! ”

This latter was the exclamation that Mr. Beanson made, when at this stage of his reverie he discovered that he had emptied the entire contents of his bottle of “ Fragrant Bear’s Oil ” upon his red head. A hasty application of a towel, however, saved the only paper collar of Mr. Beanson from utter ruin.

Having at last, after much consultation, the authority of his piece of looking-glass for considering his toilet complete, Archibald set out for Folsom Street, whistling as he went, “ *See the Conquering Hero Comes !* ” After marching thus to his own music for three or four blocks, it occurred to Mr. Beanson that he might tell the story of his upsetting the “ Bear’s Oil,” in his haste to serve Miss Clayton. This, he argued, would be a natural introduction to business, besides, with a little previous study, and with the addition of a well-contrived witticism, it might at once impress the young lady with his mental quickness and brilliancy. So, all the rest of his journey, Archibald racked his brains, turning over and over the details of his own case, and the possible analogy of Elijah’s bald head being saved by bears ; but to have rescued his own bones from a worse fate than overtook the forty children, he could not hit upon anything that suited him. He finally abandoned the idea in despair. “ No, no, I must trust exclusively to my legal knowledge, and,” Mr. Beanson added to himself, buttoning the last button on his threadbare coat, “ and to my — to my personal appearance.”

So, after all his preparation, Mr. Beanson was ushered into the parlor of the elegant house, feeling more confused and looking more stupid and care-worn than ever before, in all the uncertain years of his unfortunate career.

"It was very kind of you to come, Mr. Beanson," said Amelia, offering him a chair.

"Yes — I mean no, Miss Clayton," and Archibald was seated, assuming the straight position of the old Egyptian statues in the British Museum, his hands luckily concealing the worn places on the knees of his seedy pantaloons.

"Our affairs," continued Amelia, with a sigh, "are in a sad state."

"Sad, indeed, Miss Clayton, and if I could do anything for you in the legal line, Miss Clayton, I cannot tell you how gladly I would serve you."

"But are you not bound to Mr. Lang?"

"No, Miss Clayton, not professionally, or I think in any way. I am not Mr. Lang's attorney. I have only done the notary business, in the sale of the property."

"Then you can tell me how much is sold?"

"Yes, Miss Clayton, I am sorry to say that all is sold — all is sold."

"But what right had Mr. Lang to sell all of the property — especially my part?"

"Your own written and acknowledged full power of attorney."

"Who gave him such powers?"

"You, Miss Clayton."

"Why, that was not what mother signed before you, and that is not how you explained it."

"True, Miss Clayton, but you remember I was requested not to go into the full particulars. I certainly thought you understood all. Mrs. Clayton signed and acknowledged a general power of attorney sometime afterwards. It was a special power of attorney that was explained, and that she signed before you. The one

that you executed was a general, or full power of attorney."

Amelia here changed color, and, without knowing it, bit her lip. She had not forgotten the threats of Lang, and she now saw very clearly what they meant. "Do you know, Mr. Beanson," she said, with forced deliberation, "I believe that there has been a glaring fraud here?"

Mr. Beanson, who had been congratulating himself upon having got along so nicely, never before having felt so much at ease in the presence of a lady, now made a quick start, and sat up straighter than ever in his chair. "It is quite possible, Miss Clayton," for the idea had finally stricken him, too, "but — but Miss Clayton, Mr. Lang has conducted everything strictly according to law. I fear there is little hope — unless, perhaps, you would choose to sue for — to sue" —

"Anything, Mr. Beanson, that will expose the villainy, and restore us our own."

Archibald had changed his mind in the presence of so much simple dignity, and elegance, and beauty. Some of the wild thoughts that he had entertained while making his toilet, began to seem incongruous, even to his own incongruous mind. He was conscious of something like a reverence for Amelia. This is why he began to hesitate, and was now positively silent.

"What were you going to suggest?" said Miss Clayton, anxiously.

"I had thought — that — probably — that the surest way of reaching Mr. Lang would be to — make him suffer for his villainy in damages — in a suit for — for" —

"Well, what, Mr. Beanson? Probably I can under-

stand you, or if not, you can explain the technical terms afterward."

"For — for breach of promise!" faltered Archibald.

Amelia reddened instantly. "Nothing of the kind, sir. There was never an engagement between us."

Mr. Beanson now looked more like the Egyptian statue than ever. A moment of silence elapsed.

"Mr. Beanson," at length began Amelia, in a voice that had an effect on his nerves like brushing his hair with a soft brush, it seemed to vibrate so about the roots of that gentleman's ruddy locks — "Mr. Beanson, I know that I am young in the world and inexperienced; and I here make my first business decision in concluding that you are an honest man, and I believe you will not prove me wrong. I have just returned from my mother's banker's. I find that we have a balance there of thirteen hundred and forty dollars. That, I suppose, is our all on earth. I see that the world has not used you very kindly. Here is a check for the forty dollars. When you look upon the wretched signature that my poor prostrate mother has made such an effort to sign for you, you may be reminded how helpless are those who are trusting themselves to your honesty."

The Egyptian statue did not move.

"Take it, Mr. Beanson, and use it on yourself. As much of the remaining sum as we can possibly spare we will devote to the exposure of this wretched fraud. Employ the best counsel you can; unravel the matter thoroughly; and you shall have no reason to regret it."

There was something like a subterranean noise heard somewhere about Mr. Beanson's throat, and a large tear, falling from his eyelash, glanced from his nose.

"Kee — keep it, Miss Clayton, till I have done some-

thing for you. You — you would make an honest man of a rogue. I — I can't take it till I have earned it. I never refused money before ! ”

“ And you shall not now,” rejoined Amelia, placing the check in his hand.

“ Please, Miss Clayton ” —

“ Come, you would not offend me at the start.”

Archibald could not disobey a command ; he could not promise what he would do — in short, all power of utterance had left him, and, stumbling finally to the door and opening it, he came in violent collision with Miss Garr, who may have been listening, but who immediately screamed, and then told Amelia that her mother had just sent for her.

It was undoubtedly the happiest epoch of Mr. Beanson's life. He dined that day at Martin's, where he drank gratefully to the health of Amelia and to the success of his first brief.

Whatever Miss Garr was doing at the parlor door at the eventful time when she received a severe contusion on her upper lip, it is certain that her uneasiness and suspicion were strengthened by the strange conduct of which Amelia was guilty on that very night.

At about half-past ten, Miss Garr's attention was aroused by steps proceeding from Mrs. Clayton's to Amelia's room. Supposing that the weary girl was going to retire, Sophia proceeded with her employment, namely, writing letters on her monogrammed paper.

Finally, Miss Garr having acquainted all of Mrs. Clayton's early friends in the State of Maine that the Claytons were now beggars, looked up, and was surprised to find the light still in Amelia's chamber. Then

Miss Garr looked at her watch, and was shocked to find that it was half-past eleven o'clock. All her little evil half-drawn conclusions became facts instantly. Of course that wretch of a red-headed pettifogger was an accomplice of Dixon's, and to-night was the one chosen for the long-expected elopement. Miss Garr did not care to prevent it, but witness it she must. So, laying down her pen, Sophia crept stealthily across the hall, and listened at Amelia's door. The light burning and no sound within? What, she must have gone already!

Miss Garr first thought of an excuse for coming to the door in case one should be needed; and lit quickly upon the very natural one, that she had seen the light shining through the ventilator, and feared that Amelia had dropped asleep with fatigue, forgetting to extinguish it. Thus fortified, Miss Garr knocked, but — received no answer.

"Good heavens! Gone already!" thought Sophia, as she gently pushed the door open. Then Miss Sophia stared in speechless amazement.

At the head of the bed was the form of Amelia, with her long brown hair disheveled, her face buried in the pillow, her body bent and prostrate, and her soul — buried, bent, and prostrate, in earnest supplication before the throne of Him who tries all hearts — and comforts them.

Amelia did not hear the door open.

"Well, I never!" gasped Miss Garr, closing it and hastening back across the dark, silent hall to her own room, where she went to bed instantly, covering up her head as if she had seen a ghost.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN THE LISTS.

It was on a bright forenoon, after exchange hour, when Mr. Shallop, having made his usual call at the elegant house, bore away the cheerful intelligence that Mrs. Clayton was able to sit up in her own room.

Only the day before, Mr. Beanson had made his first report on the success of his investigations, and it was anything but encouraging; yet Amelia felt more hopeful, now, than she had at any time since the catastrophe. The balm of the glorious morning, and the good news from her mother that came with it, seemed to have grown together, somehow, into one feeling of gratitude. There is, perhaps, a certain heroic poetry in youth and health, that the minstrels have never sung.

As she sat and looked out upon the lawn, through the same window at which she had sat on the eventful evening when she had last seen Amos, it may be that Amelia allowed her thoughts to dwell momentarily on a subject which the minstrels and minnesingers have worn to atoms. If she did, it was not in the sentimental strain of old Guillaume de Lorris, or Christian von Hamle. She merely thought she would like to have some one near her who was simple and honest, after the experience of so much deceit and villainy — something strong to lean upon in the general shipwreck. Then she assured herself she would have sent for such a one long

ago and warned him of the threats that had been made against him — if the misfortune had not come. Now, she might be misunderstood ; besides, this was not the proper time for such thoughts. She must help herself, and Heaven would help her. Had not Heaven already heard her ?

“ Miss Garr,” said Amelia, continuing a conversation they had had at breakfast, “ I have resolved to try.”

“ Laws ! Amelia. Go to teaching school ! What will the world think ? They will call it so vulgar.”

“ Miss Garr, you are the last one who should say such things about what has been the honorable employment of the greater part of your life.”

“ Why, one would actually think it was necessary ; as if the furniture of this rich house were not ours — I mean yours and your mother’s.”

“ It is necessary. The lawyers tell us to prepare for the worst. We may have to leave this house in nine weeks from to-day.”

“ Just to think of it ! ” exclaimed Miss Sophia, who never *did* think of it, without becoming angry. “ Dear Amelia, I will be back in a moment.”

Miss Garr proceeded to Mrs. Clayton’s room, and, suppressing as much of her wrath as possible, took a round-about way of asking her old friend from the State of Maine, when the monthly stipend would cease to be paid.

“ This must be the last month, Sophia, unless matters mend.”

“ There is the furniture, you know, Mrs. Clayton,” insinuated the old friend.

“ Yes, but we must live on that, till that willful girl, — but I cannot find it in my heart to scold her, now, Sophia.”

Miss Garr arose to go, angrier than ever. Mrs. Clayton stopped her at the door, with these words: "I see that you are grieved at the thought of parting with us, and I have grown to regard you so, dear Sophia, that I hope you will consent still to remain with us, and share what little is left."

"I think I shall always board with you, Mrs. Clayton," was Miss Garr's tender response, as she closed the door behind her and hastened back to Amelia.

"Well, well," sighed Sophia, "after thinking it over in my own room, Amelia dear, I come to conclude that you are right. Let us go and see about it right away."

"Where shall we go, and what shall we do?"

"To the Rooms of the Board of Education," replied the experienced Sophia; and to those "Rooms" they went.

In a great building at Paris, there is a hall with a checkered marble pavement, where litigants walk up and down, awaiting the decision of their cases in law. This is called "The Hall of Lost Steps." There is an ante-room in the public buildings of most of our great cities, where inexperienced girls, thrown for the first time on their own resources, watch and wait upon the beck of that great man, the School Superintendent. Justice here crushes hope out of young hearts and old ones, just as it does in the great capital — only we do not call this ante-room "The Hall of Lost Steps," or of lost hopes, or by any more poetic name than that of "The Board Rooms."

There were no vacancies in the department, at that time, but there might be one at any moment, said the gracious man of schools. They must come again. The superintendent would be glad to do anything he could for them. They came again and again and again. A

vacancy occurred at last. Amelia had no experience in teaching; Sophia had. Amelia had no certificate; Miss Garr had innumerable certificates. The school was given to Miss Sophia Garr, on the recommendation of the superintendent, and by the unanimous approval of the whole Board. Amelia was kindly advised to take a school in the country, to gain experience, and wait for the regular examinations; when, if she were deserving, a certificate would be awarded to her. Then, after all the experienced applicants, and all the inexperienced personal friends of the Board were provided for, it was probable that she might sometime get a primary school. This was Justice, but a "Hall of Lost Steps," and of lost hopes, and crushed hearts led to it.

Amelia bethought herself of a new field, and applied at the private schools for a situation to teach music; but there were no vacancies, or, where one was expected to occur, her inexperience always arose up before her, like a Nemesis.

This fruitless search was the employment with which she had filled up the hours when away from her mother. It was undoubtedly fortunate for Mrs. Clayton's recovery that she knew nothing more about these late efforts, than that Sophia had gone to teaching again. Mrs. Clayton, in fact, was not fairly awake to the dire reality of things, though she had finally so far recovered her precarious strength as to come down to the parlor, and sit in an easy chair. Her nervous petulance had strangely disappeared, and a certain dreamy listlessness had taken its place. The shock had evidently worked some powerful change in her, and the anxious tenderness with which Amelia regarded her was sad, yet beautiful to see.

The morning of her mother's reappearance in the

parlor was a time of so great inward rejoicing for Amelia, that she resolved to rest one day, at least, from the disheartening search after employment. Her mother had been spared to her through all — and it seemed so long since they were ruined — and had come down to her usual place at last. This should be a holiday, dedicated to her mother.

When Mr. Shallop communicated the news about Mrs. Clayton that morning, a visible trepidation passed over the frame of his employer, Mr. Lang; but it did not last long, and business proceeded as usual, till early in the afternoon. Mr. Lang then went out, saying that he might not be back again that day.

After a late lunch, Amelia and her mother had ventured on the lawn. Mrs. Clayton soon complained of fatigue, yet was loath to leave the sun — which, at any time of the year, is a grateful guest in San Francisco. Leaning on her daughter's arm, she had been led to a large rustic seat, protected by trees from the light afternoon wind of that early season. Here they sat in the cheerful sunshine, which was admitted from one side of the little inclosure. Amelia was almost happy herself at the apparent happiness of her mother. As they talked pleasantly together, a faint thought of the sad reality would sometimes cast a momentary shadow across Mrs. Clayton's face, but Amelia, seeing it, would briskly begin some new subject that would restore the passive, listless smile.

Thus the daughter was spending her holiday, dedicated to her mother — when she felt a sudden sinking of the heart, and an accompanying chill, as if the air about her had become heavier and colder. A deep, real shadow rested for a moment on the rustic seat, just between her-

self and her mother. She gazed first at her parent's face and then all around the lawn, but the shadow was gone; and Mrs. Clayton had not seen or felt it, for she talked on in the same quiet strain.

A few moments afterwards, a servant put a card into Mrs. Clayton's hand, and announced that Mr. Lang was waiting to see her in the parlor.

"Will you go with me, Amelia?"

"No, mother, I must not."

Amelia assisted Mrs. Clayton to the parlor door, and retired to her own apartment.

The interview between Mrs. Clayton and Mr. Lang was a long one, and resulted in the latter's regaining his complete mastery over that shattered woman. He explained to her that he had been well-nigh ruined, along with her, but that an unexpected rise in the stock of the "Green Lion" had so far placed him on his feet again, that he could yet afford Mrs. Clayton and her daughter an affluent support — "if," said Mr. Lang, "I only had some warrant for doing so — something, you understand, to stop the prattle of idle, gossiping tongues."

Mrs. Clayton thought she understood him.

"How unreasonable, then, would it be for Amelia to condemn herself, and you, her indulgent mother, to hopeless poverty."

Mrs. Clayton was silent.

"I am sure, my dear madam, I would not make her such a bad husband."

"You know, Mr. Lang, you have always had my consent, but I will tell you candidly that I have never yet succeeded in forcing her to do what she thinks is wrong."

"And you have not revoked your consent, Mrs. Clayton?"

"No, Mr. Lang."

"Then let us send for Amelia."

"Mr. Lang, I begin to feel weak. I will send a servant to you, who will be the bearer of any message to my daughter; but you will permit me to retire."

"Nothing could have served my purposes better," mused Lang, as Mrs. Clayton withdrew.

The servant, having been dispatched by the broker, returned with an answer, — "Miss Clayton refuses to see Mr. Lang!"

This, certainly, is no very favorable omen, thought that gentleman, as he sat alone in the parlor, still detaining the servant. "Tell her," said he, "that I desire to speak to her a moment, on business of the utmost importance to herself, and all she holds dear to her."

The servant disappeared again: "Dear to her, dear to her," repeated Lang to himself, and a feeling of desolation swept over him like a simoom. For Lang loved Amelia — loved her in his own despite, with a love that waxed as his hope waned. "Dear to her," he repeated once more; "who's dear to her?" and the broker bowed his head as if to let the simoom pass over him.

The servant reappeared. "Miss Clayton refers Mr. Lang to her lawyers, who now conduct all the business affairs of her mother and herself. Mr. Lang will learn who her lawyers are, in due time."

The broker started impulsively to his feet, raised his clenched fist, and then, suddenly recovering himself, said to the servant, "Stay a moment. Tell Miss Clayton that it is her mother's request and command, that she should come to the parlor."

When the servant had gone, Lang thought to himself that he had gained one point at least. He had learned that the law was on his track. He must prepare for the defense. Mrs. Clayton had told him nothing of this, and, upon the whole, he concluded that she knew nothing of it. It smacked too much of that determined girl. It was all Amelia's doings; and, strange to say, Lang's admiration of her was increased, by the conclusion he had come to. This consciousness of danger, too, revived him. He had reached an oasis.

"Where *is* my mother?"

Lang looked up, startled. It was not the servant, but Amelia, who had opened the door.

A thrill of pleasure passed over Lang, which he had never experienced in her presence before. It seemed years since he had seen her. Rising as soon as he could, he stepped gracefully toward her and extended his hand — a movement of which she took not the least notice, but, looking about the room, asked again, "Where is my mother?"

"I am sorry to say," replied Lang, "that Mrs. Clayton, grieved by her daughter's strange conduct, has retired to her own apartment."

"Then I will go after her."

"If you do," said Lang hastily, "you will bring about a relapse."

Amelia stopped short, and held counsel with herself for a few instants. Considering all the circumstances, as they were thus presented to her mind, it seemed more than probable that such a calamity might be brought about at that time. Amelia turned quickly, and darted a haughty look at her artful persecutor. Lang winced, and his eyes fell.

Miss Clayton seated herself in the chair nearest the door, saying coldly, "I am constrained, sir, to listen to what you have to say."

"Miss Clayton," faltered Lang, in evident embarrassment, "I seem to be in the presence of an unpropitious goddess. Love or hate never goes *in the middle things*, as they say in Latin. One overrates and the other under-rates its object. Love is the microscope that discovers an inhabited world, in a drop of water — say a tear. Hate is the telescope through which a crooked philosophy, looking backwards, as it were, from the stars, discovers the vast earth to be but an inhabited drop of water, in the great sea of creation. Both are right, and both are wrong ; and I," concluded the broker, uneasily, "am certainly in the presence of an angry goddess."

Before Lang had got half through this studied speech, he saw that he had, in his embarrassment, introduced it in the wrong place. He now sat cursing his awkwardness, and remembering that he had never before felt so little at ease in the presence of a lady. He began, moreover, to look upon the result of the interview with apprehension, which was not dispelled by the contemptuous manner in which Amelia, after a short pause, said —

"Well, sir, was it to hear this wild talk that I have been well nigh dragged here? Is this the important business?"

"It may, Miss Clayton, have some remote connection with it, but I must confess, I was talking half to myself, explaining thus the unexpected coldness of my reception here."

"Unexpected!" repeated Amelia. "What else could you expect in this house?"

"Some grateful acknowledgment for having periled my fortune to save yours and your mother's."

"The law, sir, will, I trust, award the proper guerdon to such chivalrous knighthood. In the mean time, I warn you I shall not sit here much longer. I must know, without further delay, what your business is with me."

"It is to restore your property to you."

"Which acknowledges that you have taken it from us."

"You do not understand me, Miss Clayton; I mean to say that my business here now, is what shall be the business of my lifetime — to restore you to the place from which fortune has cruelly cast you down."

"No more of this, sir! Do you think that I am not aware of the villainy that has taken away my worldly goods, and opened my eyes to its hideous self? I am not cast down, sir. I am elevated by the very contempt I feel for you."

"And, perhaps, by your forgetfulness and disobedience of your mother's wishes," interposed Lang, angry, yet writhing under her scorn.

Amelia turned deadly pale. Lang flattered himself he had made a home thrust, for she did not speak. He resolved now to change his tactics.

"Miss Clayton," said he, in an altered tone, "I did not come here to quarrel with you; and, indeed, my heart revolts at a thing so foreign to its utter devotion to you and yours. I am sorry that I was forced to make allusion to the known wishes of your noble, long-suffering parent; but, for her sake, I hope you will weigh well what I am about to say. You are both poor now — hopelessly poor. I am rich, rich in all but the possession of what I ask — beg from you. Without you I shall be poorer than you *can* be. I would give all I have, or ever expect to have, to be the successful beggar at your feet. Certainly you are laboring under some false impression.

Let the law investigate my conduct, and then, not till then, take the hand that is offered to place you higher than you ever were before, and the heart that will always be yours, though you tread upon it now, or wither it with your mistaken scorn."

Lang's voice had assumed a pleading softness, that was a stranger even to himself, for he was then translating the only worthy passion of his whole life. He had ceased to doubt whether it was Amelia or her property he wanted. He had the latter, and the utter hopelessness of gaining the former had driven him to this desperation. Flying across the room, he threw himself at her feet.

"Therefore, choose," continued Lang. "By my side, wealth and luxury and ease; away from me, poverty and care, and, may be, disgrace. Before the living God, I swear to you that I love you better than you ever were or can be loved. Stand, O stand between me and the avenging fates of my own despair."

It was mingled surprise and indignation that had rendered Amelia so long speechless. Finally, she arose and fled to the door of the back parlor. "Mr. Lang," she said, turning upon him, "never, never come into my presence again! That is the kindest thing I find within my heart to say to you."

"What!" exclaimed Lang, rising, "you defy my anger and your mother's too?"

"I do, sir. I know not what power you have over my poor, weak mother, but I fear it is great, and I know it is baneful. But, I believe, should you both be arrayed against me, Heaven would still be on my side. With such an ally, I shall be neither poor nor weak, and never disgraced."

"No," interposed Lang, with a hiss, "considering who

is the incarnate deputy here on earth. Mrs. Amos Dixon may not be poor or weak, but she will be supremely ridiculous, even "— here Lang's black eyes looked murder — "even if she has the good fortune to be left a widow. By the way, your clandestine meetings are well known. I merely allude to them to warn you to a little more caution."

"I scorn you and your insinuation, as Mr. Dixon must your threats," retorted Amelia, opening the door by which she had paused; "but, let me say, once for all, that since my mother has no right to wed me to a villain, who has robbed us both, if you and she persist, *I defy you both!* Now, sir, so help me Heaven," said Amelia, raising her hand above her head, "I will starve before I will ever disgrace myself, and the memory of my dead father, by speaking to you again!" And she closed the door heavily behind her. The hollow sound that it made will ring in the broker's ears for days and nights to come.

To George Lang the parlor was now a desert indeed. The simoom again swept over him, and he was smothered and choked by the terrible hot sands. He could not afterwards tell how he left the house, which he was never to enter again.

CHAPTER XXX.

UP THE STEEPS WITH GLOVERSON.

"DIXON, sir!" said Mr. Gloverson, in his counting-room, one afternoon, as Amos was about closing his books for the day, "Dixon, sir, why don't you get married?"

If a hundred-pound shot had seen fit to go with a sudden crash through the window above his head, Mr. Dixon would not have been more taken aback. He changed color and stared at his employer.

"Dixon, sir, I say," repeated the redoubtable Andrew, and there was an indescribable leer in his eye, "why *don't* you get married?"

"That is an odd question, Mr. Gloverson."

"Gad, sir, I'll introduce you to some one that'll make you!" rejoined Andrew, with a manner as obscure as his speech.

"Indeed, Mr. Gloverson?"

In less kindly eyes than the round full ones now bent upon him, Amos at that moment might have appeared very like a young man whom some practical parent has inopportunately discovered with an arm about a daughter's waist.

The sadness that soon after came over Dixon's face might have been mistaken, on the same theory, for penitence, out of which had grown a temporary resolve to use, in the future siege of the aforesaid young lady's affections, every other species of beleaguering warfare, than the romantic one of circumvallation.

It was only this sadness, however, that arrested Mr. Gloverson's attention. "Cheer up, Dixon, sir, ch'rup!" said the kindly old gentleman. "Question's not odd at all, sir. Why, you are a good-looking fellow — getting better looking every day. Why, sir, I'll be — sworn," substituted Mr. Gloverson, considerably deferring the oath till it should be demanded of him, "yes, sworn, sir, that you are almost a dandy, sir, almost a dandy!" And his employer regarded with no little pride and triumph the elegant set of Dixon's clothing, whilom so wrinkled and seamed.

Amos also glanced at his attire ; but it was anything but a consolation to him. He looked upon his neatly fitting garments as so many votive offerings made to Amelia, his beautiful saint, who had nevertheless permitted the shipwreck.

"Now look here, Dixon!" resumed Mr. Gloverson, stepping back a pace, and regarding his cashier in mysterious silence.

Amos, after waiting vainly for his employer to continue his remarks, finally looked up and returned his stare.

Thereupon Mr. Gloverson stepped as straight and as close up to Dixon as the rotundity of one of their persons would conveniently allow, and tapping him quickly on the breast with the fat forefinger of his right hand, stopped short, and regarded the surprised cashier with an air of awful mystery. "Strictly confidential, you know, old fellow!" at length said Mr. Gloverson as he took a step backwards, not removing his eyes from those of Amos.

"What!" exclaimed Dixon, "I hope nothing has happened."

"No ; nothing has happened," replied Andrew, for the

first time letting his eyes fall, "nothing *has* happened, but — but, sir, I never go back on my own judgment. Something is going to happen."

Mysterious silence again reigned in the counting-room.

"Now look here, Dixon," finally repeated Mr. Gloverson, his voice breaking in spasmodically upon the stillness of the apartment, like a large stone upon the quiet surface of some desolate pond. "Now look here, Dixon, sir; this thing is strictly confidential, you know, old fellow!"

"Certainly, Mr. Gloverson; but you frighten me. Why do you hesitate? Have you," added Amos apprehensively, "have you lost confidence in me?"

"Dixon, you be d—d. You know better, — see how you have interrupted me. I would have got it out long ago, only Dixon, sir, you have interrupted me."

"I beg pardon, sir."

"No, Dixon, I beg yours. I interrupted myself; but, Dixon, sir, I am having meetings, sir, meetings!"

"What kind of meetings, Mr. Gloverson, may I ask?"

"Why, meetings with somebody" — here Andrew again paused, and, regarding his employee with an indescribable leer and tapping himself gallantly on the breast, continued, — "with somebody, sir, who is — a lady!"

Mr. Gloverson now hustled backwards to the farthest end of the counting-room, and again took a deliberate observation on Amos to see the effect pronounced by this wonderful revelation.

Mr. Dixon could not help a smile, as he said, — "In this evidently delicate matter, Mr. Gloverson, what part am I to take?"

"A very important one, Dixon, a very important one.

Serve me in this matter and you will be serving yourself. A marriage would result in the happiness of us both."

"I am sure, Mr. Gloverson, any assistance that I can honorably render" —

"*Honorably* render! What do you mean, sir?" And the portly merchant was so much moved that he paused to catch his breath. "I wish, Dixon, you hadn't said it. Somehow, it makes me feel bad; because, Dixon, because she is such an angel, that ever since you said it," continued Mr. Gloverson with a certain feeling gesture, that will make itself in the reader's mind, "somewhere about here, you know, Dixon, my waistcoat has been a d—d bad fit, sir, a d—d bad fit."

This was probably, if not the longest, at least the most pathetic sentence that the senior partner of the house of Gloverson & Co. had ever uttered in the presence of the trusty cashier. To the credit of the latter, be it said, that he detected the golden drift beneath these incoherent pebbles of speech. Amos grasped the hand of his employer as soon as he had finished. "Mr. Gloverson, I heartily beg your pardon; I was thoughtless, and rude only because I was thoughtless. It was the merest slip; I was only talking my usual cant."

"No, Dixon, no. I beg yours, rather. *I* was thoughtless. I didn't tell you before that she was an angel; and Dixon, sir, you know what my judgment is."

Then lapsing into a dreamy silence, Mr. Gloverson was for some moments, to all appearance, studying the architecture of a tin box of papers, on whose green sides were painted "G. & Co. 1859," in white letters. This tin box was on a high shelf in the counting-room, and to see it, it was necessary for Mr. Gloverson to turn his face inconveniently upwards and so to raise his eyes that only the whites of them could be seen by Amos.

To whom it was soon evident that his employer was not thinking of the box or the papers at all, but was yet musing on the subject of the cashier's thoughtless remark. "Dishonor, Dixon," finally said Mr. Gloverson, the whites of his eyes still visible, "Dishonor, sir, is a word that I never use in speaking of women. I never did, and I never will!"

"And I hope I never may again, Mr. Gloverson, but I must confess," pursued Amos, endeavoring to change the subject, "that you took me back, at first. I really thought that the house was about to fail, or" —

"That's it!" exclaimed the chivalrous Andrew, transferring his gaze from the tin box to Amos. "The house *will* fail without this lady in it. I am resolved to have her, — God bless her — a member of this firm, a sort of silent partner — I mean, a guardian angel, you know."

The idea of Mr. Gloverson's marriage struck Amos as a little ridiculous, but he nevertheless grasped the chubby hand that had just fallen with a determined gesture, and wringing it, wished the youthful Andrew much joy, and so forth, and so forth.

Whereat Mr. Gloverson's under-jaw fell in a cataract of surprise, from which (or from somewhere else) a mist seemed to rise before his eyes, for he wiped them with his colored silk pocket-handkerchief, and looked again and again at Amos. Then Mr. Gloverson's under-jaw all at once assumed its usual place, and that remarkable leer of his overspread his entire face. So brimful of a brilliant thought, and so intensified was this remarkable leer at this moment, that it seemed to spread beyond the copious borders of Mr. Gloverson's face, even to the folds of Mr. Gloverson's collar and waistcoat.

Whatever this sudden brilliant thought of Mr. Glover-

son's was, it was evidently a villainous one, for he apparently dared not communicate it to his honest cashier. The great merchant merely looked at his watch, and said, "Come, come, sir, it is time for the meeting. You must go with me, Dixon. I want to introduce you. Come, sir, why do you delay? A sight of her will cheer you up for a month."

Mr. Gloverson had probably spoken truth, if he and Amos had been thinking of the same person; for the latter gentleman was just at that moment wondering why he never met Amelia Clayton in any part of the city.

"I believe you!" said Amos, and then he blushed, having as he supposed, betrayed his own thoughts. Discovering, however, that he had not, he was so rejoiced that he consented to go without farther parley; and the two started forth arm in arm.

It was a remarkable sight to see these gentlemen together at any time, but it partook more than ordinarily of the melodramatic, as they reached Montgomery Street, and Mr. Gloverson without a word pulled Amos in the direction opposite to either of their homes. After awhile, the impulse seemed to die away, and the obese Andrew began to lean ponderously on his cashier. This had the tendency to crush out the reverie to which Amos had resigned himself. The brilliant thought of Mr. Gloverson, before alluded to, must have weighed him down, for he was becoming very heavy and short-winded. Under the pressure of so much reality, Amos looked about him, and discovered that they were ascending Telegraph Hill.

After toiling up some time in silence, Mr. Gloverson paused to rest. "Do-don't talk," said he, "don't talk a word, Dixon, sir. In going up a hill, Dixon, I always

find talking worse than walking, on the brea-breath. For my part I wouldn't climb so, if I were not going up to an angel. But don't — talk — Dixon, sir. You — you — ca-can't get your breath, if you do."

. This admonition was altogether superfluous: for, from that time till they had reached the summit, Mr. Gloverson, having got upon the subject of his idolatry, did not give Amos the least chance to get a word in, except it were edgewise, between the involuntary failures of Mr. Gloverson's breathing.

Dixon, however, was not disposed to talk, or, indeed, to listen. He could not help thinking of the strange sights he had seen on those very rocks, and with what foolish mystery he had connected them all with Amelia. He thought of the dream at Sonoma; then of the reality — the beckoning figure, whose silvery hair had almost touched him, as it swept by in the moonlight; and then of the undefined feeling, so woven of sorrow and joy — the inscrutable link between these dim dreams and an assuring reality — the recognition of what it was impossible to have seen before — that undefined feeling, so woven of sorrow and joy, which, that last evening on these cliffs, he had so fatally mistaken for hope.

They passed the spot where the figure had stood, and, taking a by-path to the left, came suddenly upon a little one-story house, which was concealed from view by the cliffs that towered on one side, shutting out the Bay, but not the sea. Mr. Gloverson knocked at the door, and walked briskly in. The little house had evidently only two rooms. In the front one, sat, by a very neat bed, an object that startled Amos more than he had ever been startled before — even on Telegraph Hill. It was not only the beckoning figure of the heights, but, as the

reader has known all along, poor old Aunty Owen. The evening on which he came so near recognizing her, Dixon had seen scarcely anything but her wild eyes and the hair, once so remarkably dark for her age, now white as snow. The same old benevolent face was what, at this moment, recalled her to him. Her eyes, though not so wild as when he saw them in the moonlight, were still dreamy and unnatural.

Mr. Gloverson had too much to do in gaining his breath to take any notice of Dixon's surprise. As soon as Andrew could speak, he said from the chair into which he had thrown himself, "Aunty Owen, this is Mr. Dixon, my cashier; Mr. Dixon, Mrs. Owen."

The old lady now for the first time looking up from her sewing, trembled just a little on discovering a stranger present. "Ah!" then looking closer into Amos's face, she said "Oh! Henry likes you, Henry likes you," and plied her needle as before. Then a strange light suddenly filled her eyes, as she asked in a half whisper: "Was it a gun? There, there! Henry is coming! No, no, it wasn't; but Henry is coming, Henry is coming," and the old lady sighed, and resumed her sewing.

Amos was struggling to speak.

"You see," interposed Mr. Gloverson quickly, in a low voice, "the poor thing thinks her son, who was drowned, is coming home on every steamer. She is sewing for him now. She has the greatest amount of clothing made up already, and — and, I humor her," said Mr. Gloverson, "for she is so harmless."

"Aunty Owen," Amos asked at last, "don't you remember me?"

Again the old lady gazed into his face and said,

"Henry likes you, Henry likes you;" and still seated by the window looking toward the sea, Aunt Owen resumed her work, adding at listless intervals, "Henry is coming, Henry is coming!"

"Then you knew her before," demanded Mr. Gloverson, almost as much surprised as Amos.

"Yes, I have been looking for her for many and many a weary month. Why did you not tell me about her before?"

"I would have done it, Dixon, only, sir, I thought you might consider me vain."

"Vain, Mr. Gloverson?"

"Yes, vain."

Amos now, by a series of questions, extorted from Mr. Gloverson, the fact that he had discovered the old lady a day or so after the news of her boy's loss had reached her, and, seeing the harmless and touching nature of her mania, rescued her himself from the hands of the law, and provided this little house for her. "For, Dixon, sir," concluded Mr. Gloverson, "she wouldn't live a day in an asylum. Out sight of the sea where she could not wave at every passing steamer, the poor, good old creature would die, Dixon, sir — would die."

Mr. Gloverson's voice grew husky before he closed; and Dixon looked away through the window at the distant Pacific.

The old woman plied her needle in silence.

"Late or early, Dixon, sir," resumed Mr. Gloverson, after a short pause, "night or day, sunshine or storm, at the sound of a gun she will go forth upon the cliffs, and wave at the steamer till it has passed. It's her only comfort, Dixon, sir; so she has done, Dixon, and so she shall do, through as many of the long years as God shall spare her."

"And may He bless you for it, Mr. Gloverson," said Amos feelingly.

"Henry is coming, Henry is coming," sighed Aunty Owen, in her listless way.

After an interval of silence, Amos suddenly roused himself. "But, Mr. Gloverson, how could you have joked upon such a subject? I see you are having meetings, as you say, but you never can intend to marry this unfortunate" —

"Dixon, you be d—d. I do have meetings, sir." And Gloverson looked impatiently at his watch.

"What!" exclaimed Amos, "is this not the lady you meet?"

"Why, hem, not exactly," replied Mr. Gloverson, and he assumed that same mysterious leer of his, "not exactly, Dixon, sir, but" — Here Andrew's two hands arose in a sort of convulsive movement of surprise, for a light knock was heard at the door. "That's her!" And Mr. Gloverson came in violent collision with his own chair, as he hastened to do the honors.

"Ah!" observed the gallant Andrew, "how *do* you do?" closing the door as his visitor entered, and putting his back against it, for support in the presence of the object of so much reverence. "Ah!" again observed the gallant Andrew, "Miss Clayton, allow me to present to you my trusted friend and confidential cashier, Mr." —

The sudden falling of Mr. Gloverson's under-jaw brought this elaborate oratory to an unexpected close.

Mr. Dixon, having vainly attempted to rise, had sunk back into his chair, where his face became red and white by turns; but not a word could he utter.

Mr. Gloverson turned his eyes in amazement toward Amelia, and, seeing that she seemed greatly moved, would probably have dropped down on the spot if it had not been for the mutual assistance of the door and his own back.

"Beg pardon, beg pardon, Miss. I should have asked your permission to bring him here; but he is a fine fellow, Miss Clayton, a very fine fellow. He didn't know anything about it. It's all my fault, and — and it is — strictly confidential," said Mr. Gloverson in his embarrassment. "Forgive me this time, and I'll never do it again; never, I'll be d— destroyed if I do!"

Thus concluded Andrew Gloverson, who believed himself at that moment the wretchedest of criminals. By this time, Amelia had so far recovered from her surprise as to approach Amos and take his hand.

"Will you ever forgive me," were the first words that Dixon could muster, "for all I have done? I could not help it."

"No, no," chimed in Mr. Gloverson, "he couldn't help it. I will take my oath that it was, and is all my fault; I deceived Dixon; I led him to think that I was about to marry. It was a brilliant idea of mine, but a wicked one. I haven't thought seriously of marriage for the last twenty-five years. Now, upon my oath," concluded Mr. Gloverson, impressively, "Dixon didn't know whom he was going to meet."

"Then you would not have come if you thought you were going to meet me?"

"To meet you, Miss Clayton? Why, I would have gone anywhere to ask your forgiveness."

"And would never have got it" — Amos turned deathly pale — "because you have never offended me."

Amos subsided into a delirium of ineffable joy ; and Amelia went and spoke kindly to Aunty Owen. Setting down a basket which she had borne on her arm, Amelia said, " Aunty, we will look at these things directly," and turned her attention again to the gentlemen.

" Mr. Dixon, I have wanted to see you so much. I have so much to say to you."

" And, Miss Clayton, it was a matter of life and death, and they would not let me see you."

This conversation began to be unintelligible to Mr. Gloverson, who had introduced the young gentleman and lady.

Amelia evidently did not know Karl was dead. How should Amos break it to her, and deliver the package, which, as has been before said, he always carried about with him ?

" They would not let you see me ? When, Mr. Dixon ? "

" When " — Amos hesitated. That was evidently not the time to break it to her, — " when last I was obliged to go, after you had — had so kindly intimated to me that — that another " —

" It was all a mistake. It is about that other that I want to warn you, Mr. Dixon."

This conversation was becoming more and more unintelligible to Mr. Gloverson, who rubbed his nose eagerly, and recollected distinctly that he had introduced the young lady and gentleman but a short time ago.

" He is a villain ! " exclaimed Amelia.

In his confusion, Mr. Gloverson thought that he himself might be here meant. At least he started, and remembered how criminally he had introduced the young

lady and young gentleman but a moment before, without the young lady's consent.

"Then you know it, too?" rejoined Amos.

"That's rather bold of Dixon! What can this mean?" thought Andrew Gloverson.

"Yes, Mr. Dixon, he is a villain, and has as much as threatened your life."

"Dixon be d—d!" thought Mr. Gloverson. "I wouldn't touch a hair in his head. Come, this must mean some one else!"

"Threatened my life?" repeated Amos. "Tell him, if you please, that I do not fear him."

"I shall never disgrace myself by speaking to him again. But you will, Mr. Dixon, for your own sake, for this kind gentleman's sake — whom I am glad to learn is your employer — and, may I add, for my sake, be on your guard. I have wanted to warn you so long."

So much hope had now broken in upon Amos that he seemed blinded as with a great light. He was dimly conscious of having forgotten something. He made one or two vain efforts to recollect. He was so absorbed in some one else, that he could not for the moment get his mind back to Karl and the package.

"Well, I'll be — I'll give it up, Dixon, sir," broke forth Mr. Gloverson at last, "didn't I introduce you to Miss Clayton a few moments ago, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Gloverson, but I was introduced to her before, though the acquaintance had been broken off" —

"By Mr. Dixon, through an unfortunate misunderstanding of his own," interrupted Amelia.

More delirium for Amos.

"Well, Dixon, sir," observed Mr. Gloverson, throwing himself back in his chair, "isn't she an angel?"

"She has always been a guardian one to me — I beg your pardon, Miss Clayton, I did not mean to make you blush."

Amelia had commenced unpacking her basket and displaying the little supplies she had brought for Aunty Owen.

"A perfect angel!" exclaimed Mr. Gloverson, now more and more relieved from the surprise that had been steadily accumulating, and coming into his natural state of admiration and even reverence. "A perfect angel, Dixon, sir, a perfect angel, and she can't help it. And just to think that you should have known her before, sir. Now, sir, it was only lately that I caught her coming here, though I have every reason to believe that she has been coming here for a long time. I watched her, Dixon, sir, I did, till I found out the days she comes. I know them; Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Am I right?"

Amelia turned her eyes toward her portly eulogist, and answered, with a half-suppressed laugh, "Those are the afternoons, Mr. Gloverson."

What would the kindly Andrew have thought, had he known that Amelia had been more regular in her visits, and more tender toward the poor old woman since the date of her own misfortunes; and had he known of the rebuff she had received that very day, when she had made an effort to help herself? As it was, Mr. Gloverson could only join Amos in watching her silently and admiringly, as she arranged, one after the other, the things she had taken from the basket, even to the bouquet of flowers, which she placed in a vase on the bureau.

"Henry likes you," said Aunty Owen, after looking

some time dreamily into Amelia's face, "Henry likes you," and quietly resumed her sewing.

When it came time to leave the little house, it was a remarkable union of gallantry and tenderness with which Mr. Andrew Gloverson insisted on carrying Amelia's basket. The lightness of his heart and feet, as he walked on one side of her, with Amos on the other, can hardly be imagined. At the foot of the hill, Mr. Gloverson, all at once, looked at his watch, and exclaimed with much transparent artfulness, "How could I?—that engagement! Good-by, good-by; God bless you both!" And Andrew, transferring the basket to Amos, disappeared around the nearest corner, from which he watched the couple long and wistfully. Then, not knowing exactly what to do, he followed them at a distance, to the farther extremity of Montgomery Street, astonishing more than one foot-passenger by the ardor with which he said from time to time, "I never will go back on my own judgment; something is going to happen!" And almost immediately after Mr. Gloverson would, in his abstraction, come in vigorous contact with some reckless urchin, or some meditative old lady, who happened to be going in an opposite direction.

When Amelia was alone with Amos, she told him all that she knew about the fraudulent ways of Lang, and of the well-nigh hopeless means she had taken to recover the property. Under the circumstances, Dixon felt no hesitancy in relating all that he knew of Karl's last moments, together with certain things not at all complimentary to the "Stock and Money Broker." Amelia finally told Amos of her fruitless attempts to find employment. When she saw these confidences had distressed him, she demanded of herself reprovingly why

she had made them, and concluded that it was because — she couldn't help it. As a reparation, however, she assured Mr. Dixon that with a chance to help herself — and it must come sooner or later — she would be comparatively happy.

It was a long time after this announcement before Amos spoke. When he did, his face bore an expression that Amelia had never seen there before. All the long hidden good of his honest, stalwart soul was looking out upon her, and he said, "The chance to help yourself — it will come; it *shall* come!"

At the gate of the elegant house no longer hers, or her mother's, Amos delivered Karl's package.

"Shall I invite you in, Mr. Dixon, after the indignity that has been heaped upon you here?"

"Not to-day, Miss Clayton. You must want to open the package. I will leave you to it now. Poor Karl!"

"Poor Karl!" repeated Amelia, taking the hand of Amos. And they parted without another word.

Most grown women — and men, too, for that matter — hug to their hearts some memory they look back upon, as the object about which their destiny might have been turned into another channel. There is almost always some one they loved, or might have loved, if death or distance had not placed the insuperable barrier. Many a woman who is married to honest John to-day, and sighs regretfully for Reginald that she might have married, might have sighed regretfully for honest John instead, if she were married to Reginald to-day. Mistakes are liable to be made in both ways, and a last love may be a true love. There is, somehow, a place in the heart

for longing; and many a weary hour is filled up in the exercise. Old letters and locks of hair, etc., etc., are the well known offerings at this shrine. Amelia knew that she loved the man Dixon, more than the spirit Karl — that she bowed before one, and aspired toward the other; but Amelia was a woman, and there was that place in her heart for longing; and it is more than probable that Karl is Amelia's "might have been."

She went to her room to open the package. In a little box she found an exquisite sea-shell that Karl himself had picked up at Bermuda. The outside of this unexpected memento — of different shades of crimson, and studded at intervals with little petrifications of moss — bore a solid gold plate, just large enough for the inscription, "*Amelia*," "*Christmas*." The shell opened on little gold hinges, from which the whiteness of the inside commenced in pearl and blending gradually into all the shades that are lovely with white, melted or rather blushed, at the fluted edges about the golden clasp, into the crimson of the outside of the shell. It was a little dream of fairy-land — all pure and transparent, like Karl's own nature.

Amelia's first feeling was a delightful surprise. But attached to the inside by a tiny chain of gold was a little scroll of parchment, which unrolled as the shell opened. Upon this there was some feeble writing, evidently in the donor's hand. She read, after much effort and many tears, —

THE VOICE OF THE SHELL.

Amelia, take the little gift,
Men neither sell nor buy —
I mean this fleck of fancy-drift
Athwart my Christmas sky;

And find within the nestling place
The ocean sprites have wrought,
Though set anew with tyro grace,
An olden pearl of thought:—

When in the long, long future time,
This shell sings of the sea,
May some low voice, within this rhyme,
Sing to thy heart of me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AMOS DIXON PROVIDES FOR TWO PERSONS.

OTHER eyes than the exulting ones of Mr. Andrew Gloverson watched the course of Amelia and Amos through Montgomery Street that afternoon — eyes that did not lose them in the throng. On the track of the young couple were steps which did not turn back with the good old merchant at Market Street.

Dixon, on his return from the elegant house, met George Lang, face to face, on the corner of Folsom and Second streets. The broker had just issued from a neighboring saloon, wiping his mouth. They looked each other squarely in the eyes, but neither spoke; and Amos passed on.

After walking a little distance, Amos looked back and observed that Lang was coming in the same direction. "He cannot be following me?" thought Dixon. "I will turn up this by-street and see." At the first corner of the little thoroughfare, Amos looked again, and lo! Lang had turned into the same narrow street and was coming after him.

Dixon wheeled quickly round and commenced to retrace his steps; on seeing which Lang started a little, but kept on in the direction he had taken. They now walked leisurely toward each other. Approaching nearer and nearer their eyes met, and glaring angrily at each other, the rivals passed again, speaking not a word.

Dixon walked on, too indignant to look back, till he had reached Montgomery Street. Lang was still behind him. "There is no doubt about it," thought Amos; "he *is* following me. Probably he is going to put his threats in execution."

Dixon suddenly stopped, and waited till the broker came up. Lang was again in the act of passing, when Amos accosted him. "Sir, if I am not mistaken, you have been following me."

"Well, what if I have?" replied Lang, stopping too, and looking at Dixon, contemptuously. "Ju-ustice," he added, with a half hiccup, "ju-ustice does well to follow such as you!"

"Have you any business with me, Mr. Lang?"

"I have, sir!"

"Then state it — if you are sober enough."

"Drunk, am I? That's not the first insult I have to settle with you for."

"You can settle everything with me right now. I only wish you were sober, sir."

"This crowd," replied Lang, with drunken dignity, "is — is not the place. I'll get you alone yet, you know."

"You will never leave this place till I know why you have been dogging my steps. If it is because I am aware that you have betrayed and ruined the friend of your boyhood, and robbed inexperienced women, you should rather slink away from me, to get out of my contempt."

"One of us must pay the penalty of this language, sir," retorted Lang, becoming almost sober, with the intensity of his anger; "will you meet me, like a gentleman, sir?"

"This is the last meeting we shall ever have, with my consent. If you have been following me to put your threats in execution, now is the time. If I ever catch you at it again, I shall whip you as I would a dog!"

"Hi, hi!" said an enthusiastic voice in the crowd, which was increasing every moment.

"You will have to meet me alone yet, sir," growled Lang, edging his way out of the throng. Then his anger getting the better of his prudence, he turned and said, with a haughty curl of the lip, "The little house on Telegraph Hill, eh? It takes a coward to entice, to such places, as *respectable* a young lady as Miss" —

Lang fell headlong on the pavement before he had said the word; and, against all the rules of the prize ring, Dixon proceeded to give the broker such a hearty beating, as is remembered by the by-standers even to this day.

Amos was now hurried away by the crowd, whose sympathies he had gained by the quiet forbearance he had shown at first, and then by the expeditious manner in which he made himself the victor.

The police arrived on the spot just in time to get Lang's senseless body into a carriage and convey it to his hotel. The state of Mr. Lang's health for some days afterwards, or his pride, or some cause prevented his making any complaint to the authorities.

The next day, therefore, after business hours, Amos was at liberty to carry out the idea which had caused his face to beam so, when Amelia had said that with a chance to help herself she would be comparatively happy. "I have provided for Lang," said Dixon to himself, with just a little excusable satisfaction. "Now I must provide for Amelia — God bless her!" and Amos took up his hat.

"Look here, Dixon, sir," said Mr. Gloverson, who had been watching his cashier for some time, and who had become very red in the face, from internal chuckling. "Look here, Dixon, sir," observed the old gentleman, "you're mighty sly, sir!"

Amos blushed.

"Mi-ighty sly, sir," repeated Mr. Gloverson, closing one eye, and contemplating his cashier with the other. "Do you think I don't know of your goings on? You can get acquainted with angels — angels, sir, without my knowing it; but when you get down to plain earth, sir, I have my eye on you. A d—d rascal, sir; a d—d rascal!"

Amos varied the expression of his face by turning white.

"It's all over town, Dixon, sir, and for my part I am glad of it. An arrant d—d rascal, sir!"

"Heavens, Mr. Gloverson, what is it? Is it anything that will injure her?"

"It injure her? What do you mean, Dixon? I'd like to see the man, woman, or child, or, sir, the *it*, sir," said Mr. Gloverson, with great emphasis, "that would dare to injure her!"

Amos was silent out of sheer amazement, and Mr. Gloverson, out of sheer loss of breath.

"Dixon, sir," began the old gentleman at last, "you have been pounding, sir, yes, pounding George Lang, and I am going to give you, give you — let me see; you've got a watch — well, sir, a new hat, sir!"

"Oh! is that all, Mr. Gloverson?"

"No, sir, and a new suit of clothes besides, sir, for he is the worst rascal unhung. Fifteen thousand dollars out of my pocket into his infernal Dorcas mine!"

"How in the world, Mr. Gloverson! Why, that's what he ruined poor Schmerling with. I have all the stock in my own name — Lang must have robbed Karl to the amount of twenty thousand dollars. Why did you not tell me about this before, and I could have warned you?"

Mr. Gloverson was confused. "You see, Dixon," faltered the old gentleman, at length, "this thing has been going on some time. I didn't take much stock at first, but — but then my judgment was implicated, and so I — in fact, I paid a heap of assessments to back up my judgment, and when the stock fell, I bought it all up. The mine, Dixon, has never been developed, Dixon, and you and I, sir, at this day, I believe, own the whole of it."

"As for any real value," rejoined Amos, with a smile, "apart from a memento of Karl, I would willingly make you a present of my interest."

"You shan't do it, Dixon. What, sir, is fifteen thousand dollars to my judgment?"

They regarded each other in silence. The blank confusion suddenly disappeared from Mr. Gloverson's face as he said, "Dixon, sir, you think, probably, that my judgment has gone back on me?"

"In this one instance, Mr. Gloverson, it might have done so without" —

"That reminds me, sir," interrupted the resolute Andrew, laying violent hands on his hat, "that I never *will* go back on my own judgment, sir. Never, sir; I'll be d—d if I do!" said Mr. Gloverson, as he rolled precipitately out of the door and out of sight.

Amos could now resume the train of thought so queerly interrupted, and it was not long till he, too, had left the counting-house. For some reason, not definitely explicable to himself, he took stealthily to by-streets, going a good deal out of his way to reach a certain imposing edifice in a retired part of the city.

Having rung the bell, Amos employed himself, while waiting, in reading the large door-plate: "SEMINARY OF FASHION, BY MISS DE LA PIERRE."

— A pursuit from which his attention was suddenly distracted by many girlish screams, and the clatter of multitudinous feet, in full retreat, evidently up a stairway, on the inside of the house, not far from the door.

"Oh, laws! What is it? What is it? Shall I faint or call the police?" was heard immediately after, issuing from some one in the interior of the edifice, and obviously approaching. "Young ladies, go to your rooms, instantly."

The manner in which this mandate was obeyed, was the next moment apparent to Amos; for, as the door opened, a brilliant group of young heads was disclosed, peering down at him from the top of the staircase.

"Come right into the parlor, sir," said the same voice that Amos had heard. "You may have a daughter, sir? or I should say a sister, sir? Hem, I am Miss de la Pierre. Your card, sir? Ah! don't wish to give it, hem! By the way, did the Chinaman insult you? If he did, I will send him right away. I know it is not fashionable to have Chinamen about the house, and, as soon as our arrangements are satisfactorily completed, I can promise my patrons that I will employ nothing but maid-servants of the strictest morality."

While Miss de la Pierre had thus rattled on, she had conducted Amos into the parlor, motioned him to a seat, and taken another in front of him.

"As to the Chinaman," replied Amos, staving off the business at hand till he could collect himself, "I believe I did not see him at all. In fact, I am sure that he did not come to the door."

"Oh, laws!" exclaimed Miss de la Pierre (formerly of Vermont) whose real name, Miss Stone, had been thus Gallicized for business, and fashion's sake, "Oh

laws me! shall I ever attain to my fleeting beau-ideal of moral maid-servants?" and Amos observed that even little Miss de la Pierre's curl-papers quivered with the strength of her emotion.

Mr. Dixon now began to lead up to business, by saying that he had not exactly any daughter or sister, but he thought he could be of benefit to Miss de la Pierre's institution. Really, Miss de la Pierre was very sorry, but then she did not employ gentlemen teachers. It wasn't exactly that; it was about Miss Clayton that he had called.

Now, from Miss de la Pierre's face, it was obvious that she had been in the world quite a measure of years, but her wrinkles spoke more of disappointment than of suspicion and the kindred worldly virtues. This may account for the fact that Miss de la Pierre did not observe the thieving expression of Amos's countenance, as he pronounced Miss Clayton's name.

"Oh! Miss Clayton, I remember her perfectly. I am so sorry that the times are so hard, and then, her inexperience, that, really, I could not employ her. It is truly too bad; she would be such an example to my fashionable young ladies. Her appearance, I must say, is quite *distingué* and *comme il faut*, as we say in the language of *la belle France* — then her music; but laws me," said Miss de la Pierre, brushing back her curl-papers, "how tardy I am getting with my afternoon toilet, of late! You will excuse my appearance, I hope, sir?"

"Certainly, Miss de la Pierre, but — but, can you keep a secret?"

Miss de la Pierre's curl-papers quivered again. She had made the only change in her name that she now ever hoped for; but romance was her last love — the only

love, indeed, that had ever been returned to her. "A secret, sir!" and the little creature drew her chair nearer to Amos. "May I ask your name, sir?"

"That is not what I wanted to reveal, madam, but there is certain money in my hands at the disposal of Miss Clayton — which, in fact, according to my view of right," — here Amos looked more like a thief than ever — "belongs to Miss Clayton. Employ her here, and look to me for the salary. She must know nothing about me, or the arrangement, or she would not like to enter into it, because she does not know that I owe it to her; and, you see, she is very honorable."

Amos looked anything but honorable himself, when he had concluded this speech.

"Yes, oh laws, yes!" said Miss de la Pierre, formerly Stone, of Vermont, utterly absorbed in the growing romance.

"Well, then," began Mr. Dixon, resolving at first to dedicate his entire salary; restraining himself, however, on second thoughts, from a fear of betraying himself to Amelia, "well, then, would a hundred dollars a month be too little?"

"Oh laws, no! She wouldn't get fifty anywhere."

"Let us taper it down a little, Miss de la Pierre, just for appearance' sake — say ninety dollars a month."

"She would suspect, oh laws! she would suspect."

"Eighty dollars, then."

"Too much, sir, too much."

"She must have eighty dollars," and the determination in Amos's face drove away for a second or so the thieving look. "She *shall* have eighty dollars. Think of her — of her music, and her — her music!" exclaimed Amos, as he became confused and thievish

again. "A day laborer," concluded he, "gets more than eighty dollars a month for the days he works."

"Too true, too true, and too bad," rejoined Miss de la Pierre, now on one of her congenial and favorite topics. "Talent and learning and the fine arts are not paid in this sublunary sphere. Their millennium is in the breasts of the few — breasts," said Miss de la Pierre sadly, "which always have empty pockets in this world. If it were not for my hair," continued Miss de la Pierre, arranging her curls, from which she had, by this time, stealthily abstracted the papers and deposited them under her apron, — "if it were not for my hair, and if my woman's strength were adequate, I have often thought I would go to carrying a hod, a great, heavy, inartistic, unfashionable hod, sir;" and Miss de la Pierre watched the impression of this remark, which she had before now made with great effect to parents and guardians who grumbled at her bills, which (for fashion's sake) were not always trifles.

"Well," said Amos, "here are the eighty dollars. Will you give them to her?"

"On principle," replied little Miss de la Pierre, "on æsthetic principle, I think I will, though I may have to quarrel with my French and ornamental wax lady, Madame Du Ligné-Mouchebourg, whose name, by the way, is a great card, as you see. However," concluded Miss de la Pierre, "it can be given out that Miss Clayton has been employed at great expense, because she has once moved in high circles, and so forth, and so forth, you know."

"Anything, anything," said Amos, paying over the first month's salary in advance, looking more and more like a thief all the time, and enjoining so much secrecy

upon Miss de la Pierre, *née* Stone, that the sentimentally little woman felt sure there must be some underlying romance in this matter, which, sooner or later, would be unraveled at her own seminary, thereby giving it the most valuable advertisement and most fashionable standing.

"Will she wish to board here, sir?" asked Miss de la Pierre.

"No, I think not. In fact, I know that the state of her mother's health will make it necessary for her to be at home as much as possible. And you will let her go as often as she wants to," said Amos, rising to depart, "and never speak cross to her, and help her at first, and" —

"Oh laws me, yes! She shall be her own mistress, her own mistress. From her pleasant face, I must think our dispositions are just alike, to say nothing of our complexions, or the shades of our hair;" and so delighted was Miss de la Pierre with the clear profits of this valuable acquisition to the "Seminary of Fashion," that she still kept her seat, running over dreamily the headings of the fashionable note she should write to Miss Clayton, that very evening: how circumstances had fortunately transpired, since the occasion on which Miss de la Pierre had had the honor of meeting Miss Clayton, to make it Miss de la Pierre's duty and pleasure to solicit the attendance of Miss Clayton on the following morning. Miss de la Pierre would then be able to offer for Miss Clayton's gracious acceptance the monthly salary of eighty dollars, in gold coin, and board — "board," mused Miss de la Pierre, "yes, certainly; it's a duty that I owe to æsthetics; certainly, though of course she will not take it. — Oh laws, sir!" almost shrieked Miss de la

Pierre, "where are my manners, to have kept you standing there so long! Let me show you out, sir. — What, on earth!" exclaimed the little woman, as she and her visitor had reached the hall door, "Will I ever recover from the shock?"

Very loud giggling was heard from the head of the stairs. Miss de la Pierre turned and confronted about twenty blooming young faces, that were hastily rubbing against one another, in the attempt to get out of sight; and a perfect silver shower of laughter, falling every once in a while from this little spring sky, drowned the terrible words of Miss de la Pierre, from everybody but Amos. "Young ladies," said she, "did I not tell you to go to your rooms? You are guilty of disobedience. There shall not be a pickle put upon the table for the next week! And that is not all. You are every one of you guilty of an offense against good breeding, and — and fashion. You have been laughing at a visitor!"

Amos, who had been standing with his hat in his hand, waiting to bid the little lady good afternoon, did not seem to be abashed at all by this allusion to himself. He only glanced knowingly from a roseate face, just then peering over the balusters, down to the carpet of the hall floor, where Miss de la Pierre's curl-papers had been strown, like sibylline leaves, unconsciously by that prim lady, as she had taken her stately course through the hall.

"Never mind, sir," said Miss de la Pierre, who had quite forgotten that she had concealed her curl-papers under her apron, "never mind, sir," as she turned to bow Amos out, "I am as much amazed as you are, sir, by this extraordinary insubordination; and they shall suffer for it. Deprivation of pickles, as you may not be aware, is the

worst punishment that can be inflicted upon the inmates of a fashionable seminary."

"Good afternoon, Miss de la Pierre," said Amos.

"Not a pickle for a week, young ladies, do you hear?" for the infuriate little woman was shaking her fist at the offenders. "Not a pickle — oh laws! good afternoon, sir. Call again, pray, when I assure you, sir, the reputation of this house for good-breeding and fashion shall be sustained. Good afternoon, sir."

And Amos left little Miss de la Pierre to her pupils and her curl-papers.

The next day was Friday. Toward the afternoon, Amos grew very nervous. He would look up occasionally and catch Mr. Gloverson eying him stealthily. Then Mr. Gloverson would look up and find Amos eying *him* stealthily. This was, as they both well knew, the afternoon on which Amelia was accustomed to visit Aunty Owen.

"Dixon, sir," said Mr. Gloverson, at last, "I can't stand this thing any longer; besides, I have got to go — to go across the Bay, sir, to dinner. Excuse me to the angel, and tell her, sir, that I am desperate, sir, and that I am going to call at her house, sometime or other, sir."

"Mr. Gloverson, why not go with me to Aunty Owen's? There is no need of jealousy in this affair."

"Dixon, you be d—d. God bless you both! You know you want to be alone. Good-by till to-morrow; Dixon, sir, good-by."

And as soon as Mr. Gloverson was out of sight, Amos went as straight up Telegraph Hill as he could climb.

There sat Aunty Owen at the window, looking out upon the distant Pacific, still plying her needle, and repeating to herself at the same listless intervals, "Henry is coming, Henry is coming!"

Amos tried to lead her into conversation, but she would only look him in the face and then smile, as she said, "Henry likes you, Henry likes you," invariably resuming her needle in silence.

Amelia could not yet have arrived, but Dixon noticed that the flowers in the vase on the bureau were fresh, and that there was a little rose lying by the side of the vase. "I will put this back in its place," thought Amos, rising and walking toward it, — when, lo! the little rose was attached to a pretty white envelope, bearing his own address. This was the first time Amos had ever seen Amelia's writing, yet he was sure that nobody but so glorious a being could have done anything so elegant. He believed, then, he would have known her handwriting if he had seen it on Mount Caucasus.

Alas! the light of love is a refraction, rather than a reflection. Before now, it has made fools of philosophers, and philosophers of fools. How wise it is that Love is represented as an infant! Are not lovers always young?

"My dear Mr Dixon," read Amos, and then sat down to wait till the words, "My dear Mr. Dixon," should stop ringing in his ears. They would stop and commence again, so that the poor fellow had actually read the note twice through before he grasped the contents at all. Amelia did not know, so the writing averred, what Mr. Dixon ("My dear Mr. Dixon, my dear Mr. Dixon," said Mr. Dixon's ears) would think of getting a note from her, but still she was anxious that he should try and make Aunty Owen understand that she (Amelia) would come to Telegraph Hill as soon as she could — here Amos paused to accuse himself of great neglect and forgetfulness; and to resolve, also, that he would speak to Miss de la Pierre and have it distinctly understood that

Miss Clayton should be allowed to go to Telegraph Hill just as often as she wanted to. "For," thought he, "of course it would be too bad, not to have her come on her usual afternoons, because — because Aunt Owen would certainly miss her, and want to see her very much."

Amos resumed the reading of the note. "Besides, Mr. Dixon (' My dear Mr. Dixon, my dear Mr. Dixon, ' again quoth Amos's ears), a great good fortune has come upon me, and I could not help telling you of it, without delay. I thought, may be, too, you would like to know it. At any rate, I am so happy now that I must tell you all about it." Here followed details which Amos, despite the ringing in his ears, read over and over again, not because they conveyed anything to him about the "Seminary of Fashion" which he did not know or had not expected, but because Amelia had written it.

Amos might have been a base deceiver in this little matter, and he sometimes thought he was ; yet one thing is sure — he made the descent of Telegraph Hill, that afternoon, very, very happy indeed, for a culprit.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT THE GRAVE.

THE first fog of summer was coming in, through the same pathway between the hills that the sun had taken on its course outward to the Pacific. It was a raw evening, wet and cold, as such evenings are. The candle-light at Aunty Owen's window did not penetrate far into the mist, which covered Telegraph Hill like a pall. She could not see the ocean which was to restore her lost boy; so she could not ply her needle.

As she sat uneasily peering out into the darkness, something passed quickly across the little track of light that streamed out of the window. At this window she would never suffer a curtain to be put up. It might have been another fold of the mist rolling itself closer against the little tenement, or she might not have seen it; at least, she still sat vainly looking for the sea, as if nothing had passed before her.

A slight knock came at the door. "A gun, a gun!" exclaimed Aunty Owen, reaching for her shawl. "Henry is coming!" The door opened. "Not yet, not yet!" she said, with a sigh, and sunk back into her chair.

There entered a tall figure, muffled in the blue overcoat and cape worn by the United States soldiery. The face was almost concealed by a superabundance of dark whiskers. "Good evening, madam," observed the stranger, in a smooth voice, helping himself to a seat. Aunty Owen looked silently out of the window.

"I have frequently heard about you, and your misfortune, madam, and I have come to offer you what help I can. I trust you will allow me to add a little to what Mr. Dixon has done for you."

"Henry is coming, Henry is coming!" said Aunt Owen in her listless way.

"Here is a little purse for you," the stranger said, reaching it to her.

"For Henry? oh yes;" and she seemed to her visitor to notice him for the first time. She took the money and put it away in the bureau.

After this a vain attempt was made to lead the old lady into conversation. She was plied in many different ways, but made her usual answers, always, as it were, through her dead son. The visitor almost despairing, at last, resolved to humor her insanity, and to appeal, if possible, to the well-known craftiness of persons so afflicted.

"Henry will come," pursued the stranger, "when you have done what I ask of you. Put this in the water when Mr. Dixon asks you for a drink, after coming up the hill."

"In the water? oh yes, in the water. I will put it there now," said Aunt Owen, extending her hand for the little vial which her visitor held up before her.

"No, no, madam, it would kill *you*!"

"Kill! kill? kill?" Aunt Owen seemed to be wondering.

"Yes; if you drank it you would die; you would be dead."

"Dead! dead? drowned? No, no, he is not drowned. Henry is coming, Henry is coming!"

"Curse her craziness," muttered the tall man, as Aunt

Owen again peered silently out into the darkness, looking for the sea. "Yes," continued he aloud, "Henry is coming!"

"Where? Do you see the steamer? I cannot see the water, I cannot see the water."

"Henry cannot come till you have given some of this to Mr. Dixon, in the water to drink. Mr. Dixon has Henry hidden away. When he is dead, Henry will come. Here now," said the stranger impatiently, "will you put this into the water, and offer Mr. Dixon a drink, when he comes?"

"The water, the water, the sea, the stars! yes, the water, I see it, I see it!" and the poor creature was in an ecstasy of delight, for the fog was rising in the distance from the Golden Gate, only to pile itself the thicker on the land.

"Do you understand me?" asked the man, still more impatiently. "Will you give this to Mr. Dixon, in the water?"

Aunt Owen looked up into the bearded face that had come nearer to hers in the eagerness of this last request. Gazing at him restlessly for a moment, she said with a strange shudder, "Henry does not like you, Henry does not like you!" and, catching up her shawl, she wrapped it around her shrunken shoulders, and shivered as with a sudden cold.

"I say, will you give this to Mr. Dixon, in the water?" and in his impatience the muffled figure touched her on the shoulder. The poor creature seemed too frightened to speak, and only shuddered again.

The man sat down in his chair, baffled. He afterwards tried all manner of soothing speech, but the only notice he could get Aunt Owen to take of him was to

say, at long intervals, "Henry does not like you, Henry does not like you!"

Then there was a long silence, the stranger sitting muffled in his cape, and Aunt Owen crouching away from him by the window, and looking anxiously toward the sea, and the stars which were coming out over it.

A sudden crash was heard against the neighboring rocks, and the cliff and the little house shook again. "A gun, a gun!" exclaimed Aunt Owen, rising and arranging her shawl over her head; and without another word, she walked past her visitor and out of the door, as in a trance, her eyes bent straight ahead of her.

The next moment, the dark whiskers disappeared from the cheeks and chin of the tall man, and the angry, baffled face of George Lang stood revealed in the dim light of the deserted room.

He followed Aunt Owen at a distance, up the cliff, and saw her at the usual place, leaning over and waving her shawl at the steamer passing below. The night was yet cold and damp, and Aunt Owen's white hair was streaming in the chilly wind, beneath the starlight.

As Lang turned his steps homeward, he said between his teeth, "Old lady, you have forced me to take this disagreeable business upon myself; you might have done it without danger to either of us. Well, you have forced it on me; and if I could wish any revenge on you, as well as him, I think this night-wind will take it for me."

The broker reached his bed, but not to sleep. So vivid were the memories of the past week, that he seemed to be writhing again with the pains Dixon's beating had caused him. In his utter weariness, he would sometimes fall into a troubled doze, from which he would be aroused by the voice of some familiar friend, telling him that

Dixon's triumph was the town-talk. Dozing again, the despairing voice of his lawyer would go over and over the headings of his defense, in the great suit for fraud, which was coming on. The gruff tones of the officer, summoning him to appear before the court, would awake him, and he would sit up in his bed and stare about him, to dispel the shadows. "I cannot be well yet," thought Lang, as he laid his head once more upon his pillow. "Dixon shall suffer for these sufferings of mine."

With this consolation, he could doze again. Familiar faces of years and years ago would look in upon him, — all blending finally into that of Karl. The smile on Karl's face would darken into sorrow and then into anger, and, finally, would become so fraught with an undefined dread, and so terrible, that Lang turned his head upon the pillow to escape the horror. Then he would hear the music of the "Song of Friendship," and gradually he would see Amelia Clayton coming toward him, with a lovely smile, and her hand extended. He would wait in ineffable joy; but she would pass close by him, not heeding him — when he would discover another hand coming out to meet hers, and, as the hands met, the figure of Amos Dixon would flash triumphantly into sight; and Lang would wake with a curse upon his parched lips.

"Yes, Dixon must suffer for this, suffer, suffer, suffer;" and the weary half sleep came upon him again. Gradually a coldness began at his feet, and came in long strides toward his head — in long strides, and yet it seemed a day before these cold footsteps reached his breast. There they paused, pressing heavier and heavier. Something passed over the film before his eyes — passed and repassed. Then he saw it was the old lady of the

heights, standing ruthlessly on his breast and waving — waving at something indistinguishable in the distance.

Unable to bear it longer, Lang cried out in his misery, and the old lady seemed slowly to shrink into a corner of the room, where she crouched shivering and hiding her face, as she had done in the little tenement. Lang sat up in bed, but still he heard Aunty Owen's voice saying, "Henry does not like you, Henry does not like you!"

He sprang up and hastened to the corner whence the voice seemed to proceed. Nothing was there. "What kind of devil's panorama is this?" asked Lang, attempting to make light of his own hallucination. "It must be a sort of mental nightmare, induced by an overloaded brain." At least, he was sure it came from the head and not from the stomach. Or might it not be a warning for him to lose no more time? Were not the majority of deaths in California sudden ones? Were not the healthy and strong those who slipped from us every day? Yes, yes, revenge must be swift, or Dixon might be removed from its reach. "Then this fullness, this whirling of the head," hissed Lang, applying his hands to his throbbing temples, and the strangest hallucination of all came over him. Above the solemn din in his ears, the sound of his own heart-beats rung loud, and clear, and regular, like a funeral bell; and at each loud, clear, and regular beat, two shapes came and went alternately before his eyes, like figures on a Swiss clock — Karl, angry and terrible; and Amos, calm and triumphant. "Will daylight ever come?" moaned Lang, seating himself on his bed till the succeeding dizziness had passed away.

And then, having dressed himself, he walked the room till morning.

The morning was a bright one for two persons of your acquaintance. They hastened about their respective duties, with more than ordinary cheerfulness, for they were to meet at Aunt Owen's that afternoon. They had a sad yet grateful duty to perform then, and they looked forward to it with a sort of melancholy pleasure akin to that which one feels in remembering honest tears. Amos and Amelia were to go from Aunt Owen's to visit Karl's grave. They were to go by the street-cars to Lone Mountain. Amos had at first insisted on a carriage, but Amelia suggested that they would be more at their ease, and could walk more about the grounds, and take their time, etc., etc., if they went in the cars. So Amos was convinced, not much against his will.

Mr. Dixon happened to be at the foot of the Hill just in time to assist Amelia to make the ascent, he having been waiting for that purpose exactly one half hour by his watch. They both commented on the strange coincidence; and Amos first took possession of Amelia's basket, and then, detaining the hand that had been given to him, by way of greeting, placed it under his arm. Thus they proceeded very happily up to Aunt Owen's.

After knocking at the little tenement, they pushed the door open. The chair by the window was empty. Aunt Owen had not left her bed. As Amelia bent over her, asking one anxious question after another, Aunt Owen opened her eyes and smiled, but did not or could not speak. "She is very ill," said Amelia. "She has a high fever."

"Poor thing," said Amos. "She must have been out

in that cold mist last night, when the steamer came in. I thought of her, when I heard the gun. I will go for a doctor, and a nurse, and, and — for Mr. Gloverson. He would never forgive me, if I did not tell him immediately.”

“Yes, do, Mr. Dixon; I will stay here this afternoon,” and Amelia glanced at the flowers she had brought to place on Karl’s grave.

“We can go,” said Amos, following her eyes, “we can go on some other afternoon, when Aunty Owen is well, but if it would be any satisfaction to you — and I know it would — to have these flowers go where you intended to put them, why, as soon as I have been on my other errands, I can carry them to Lone Mountain all the same. Mr. Gloverson would be delighted to conduct you home.”

“You are so kind, Mr. Dixon. If you could only put them on poor Karl’s grave before they fade, I don’t know, but it seems that he would be grateful to you, even in the pure heaven he must have gone to — any time, you know, before they fade.”

“Before they fade, before they fade,” repeated Amos, gathering up the flowers and taking a very respectful leave. When he had got out sight of the little house, he thought what a fool he was for not thinking to say that Karl, if he knew anything about the world below, would be grateful to Amelia and not to him for this act of tender remembrance. Should he return, and say it? No, Aunty Owen might be suffering for the want of medical assistance. He hastened his steps, therefore, and sent a doctor and a nurse and Andrew Gloverson back to the aid and comfort of the unfortunate old lady.

“These flowers,” thought Amos, “I can just as well

take out there now, 'Before they fade, before they fade.' They may fade before to-morrow. I will walk to Lone Mountain and ride back. One thinks better walking."

And Mr. Dixon did think. It did not seem a long walk, yet the sun was down and the evening coming on, when he reached the cemetery. It was nearly dark as he left the grave, for he had been thinking there, too. He may have dropped a tear or so among the flowers he strewed upon the green mound; but the world is not over sentimental, and it may be well for the reputation of Amos that this part of his history is obscured by the growing darkness of that late twilight.

As he turned homewards, a muffled figure issued from behind a neighboring monument and stole hastily to the spot Amos had left. It seemed to be the purpose of this figure to follow after Dixon, for it passed hastily around the grave, groping its hand quickly through the flowers, as in search of something. Finally it stooped over the head-stone, where "KARL VON SCHMERLING" was yet legible, in large letters. Then there was a wild shriek, and the figure fell headlong over the grave.

Amos heard it and turned back. Beneath the blue military coat and cape, and the bushy, dark whiskers, he recognized — the senseless body of George Lang.

The tombstone had given Lang the first intelligence of Karl's death, and he had fallen upon the dust of the man he had ruined, stricken by the terrible affliction which, unawares to him, had been long threatening, and of whose premonitory symptoms he had, the night before, mistaken the warning. George Lang was paralyzed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT THE ALTAR.

IN the mean time, Mr. Nelson Shallop and Miss Sophia Garr had not been idle. That lady repeatedly asked herself if it was a dream, or was it, at last, the long-sought ingot of a husband? It could be no vision; Mr. Shallop was so attentive, prompt, and business-like. — “He may not weigh one hundred and fifty pounds,” mused the calculating Sophia, “but he is certainly worth his weight in gold—in American gold coin, which he has laid up!”

“The committee of Cherubim,” wrote Miss Garr to a friend in Maine — on her monogrammed paper — “the committee of Cherubim to which the business must be delegated (for I like delegated authority in heaven where matches are made), if called upon at this moment, would certainly report progress.” The fanciful as well as confused manner in which this announcement was made, is probably the best testimony to its truth. If any farther proof were necessary, the following correspondence would put the activity of those cherubim beyond the shadow of a doubt: —




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“SAN FRANCISCO, *May 22.*

“MISS S. GARR:

“D'r Mad'm,—Yours of this morning is rec'd & contents noted.

“Will you marry on terms stated at last meeting? If so, when? Respectfully,
N. SHALLOP.”

The answer to this filled the last of Miss Garr's monogrammed paper. In what happier service, indeed, could this expensive luxury have been ended?



“SAN FRANCISCO, *May 23.*

“MY OWN SWEET ONE, — You are right, and the Constitution of the State of California is wrong. A *wife* should hold no property away from her *husband*. On the nuptial morn, the three thousand dollars, my little earnings, shall be deposited in your name *at the bank*. I defer it till then as a sort of *surprise* to you — my wedding present with an *untrammelled heart*, that never loved *before*, so that all shall be joyous on that *blissful* morn.

“Will the *first* of *June* be soon enough, my dear? That is the first day of school vacation. *Why* should we *delay*? Not

for the *expense* surely. We need not get any *wedding* clothes. I shall be married in a *plain travelling dress* and *no cards*. We can take our wedding tour across the Bay, on the ferry-boat. Then you can come over to business *every day*, during the honeymoon, just the same, and not lose your *salary*. You see I am not *selfish*.

"Dear Nelson, you must not be *jealous* of that old designing scoundrel, Gloverson. I have very properly rebuffed him, telling him that my affections are *engaged*. I have reason to believe that he does not come to see me any longer, but Amelia. How *many* lovers will that *designing* girl have? Well, after marriage, I shall be removed from *such associations*. That will be *one* consolation at least.

"Let the *first* of *June*, therefore, be the *day* of our *destiny*. I *sigh* for it, and it reminds me of a piece of poetry which I can never remember: '*Beneath the sylvan tents of June.*' Is it not *beautiful*? Do you know the rest of it? If you do, I think it *apropos* to our sad-joyful case. I never can think of it. Adieu.

"*Tout à toi,*

SOPHIA."

MR. NELSON SHALLOP'S REPLY.




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"SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., May 24.

"MISS S. GARR:

"D'r Mad'm, — Yours of 23d inst. is rec'd & contents noted. 1st of June, prox., will suit, provided a certificate of deposit,

pay'ble to my order is deliv'd into my hands on that morn'g prior to performance of ceremony.

"Hop'g this will meet your approbation, I am,

"Y'rs truly,

"N. SHALLOP."

From the date of this epistle to the morning appointed for his nuptials, Mr. Shallop is a candidate for the reader's sympathies. He had no time to look forward to the splendors of his triumph, for he was harassed well-nigh to death by the trial of the case for fraud, in which he had to act for his invalid employer.

The tide seemed going against Lang till the powerful testimony of Nelson Shallop was brought in. By the aid of the office books and some awful perjuries, the crisp little clerk established that Lang had been the heaviest loser in the "Jones and Robinson" stock. So, if the broker had made a mistake in the disposal of the money accruing from the sale of the Clayton property, it was an honest mistake of judgment, which had also well-nigh resulted in his own ruin. There could be no question of his legal right to sell, for the full powers of attorney were offered — and rather ostentatiously, too — for the inspection of the court and jury. The late great rise in the "Green Lion" was well known. That had been the financial redemption of George Lang.

The case was argued long and well on both sides; Mr. Archibald Beanson, as junior counsel for the plaintiff, having made his famous first speech before a jury. The stock excitement, however, had ruined so many, and the broker had laid his plans so comprehensively, that the jury could do nothing but render a verdict for the defendant.

It was Mr. Shallop, himself, who bore the glad news to

Mr. Lang. As the clerk entered, the broker was moving slowly about his room, swearing that he would work off the miserable torpor which had seized his limbs.

"The suit's won!" said Shallop.

"Good, good! Give the lawyers a supper!"

"Yes, yes, Mr. Lang, but it was my testimony that saved you. Come, what shall I give myself?"

"Well, what does this mean, sir? What do you want?"

Mr. Shallop in fact had an unusual look about his face, which Lang did not at all like. The cast in the little clerk's eye was never before so expressive.

"What do I want?" said Nelson. "I don't want to perjure myself for nothing, and I won't."

"You seem bent on quarreling, sir. Do you think you can take advantage of me now because of this accursed affliction? You ought to know me better."

"Do *you* think, Mr. Lang, I am going to run state prison risks for *you*, without big pay for it?"

"Did I ever ask you to, you lunatic? Come, what has got into you? I will give you any reasonable reward."

"Ah! you will, will you? Now let us see. You know those deeds of the Clayton house which we exchanged?"

"I do, sir," said Lang, "and when you have given me the deed of that property which I made to you, I will restore you the one which you made to me; and then I will allow you such a reward for your services as no reasonable man would complain of."

Mr. Shallop did now what he rarely or never did. He laughed.

"Have you lost your wits, Nelson?" demanded the broker.

"Have you lost yours, Mr. Lang?"

"No, sir, by the powers, and you will find out that I have not, if you keep on, sir."

"So much the better, Mr. Lang," quoth Nelson. "Then you can understand that I am going to keep your deed of the Clayton house, and pocket the proceeds of the sale myself. You have made enough off this operation, and I have done your work long enough. That's all, sir; I thought I'd let you know."

"Are you crazy, sir?" and Lang placed himself before the door. .

"Not a bit of it, Mr. George Lang. In proof of which assertion, Mr. Lang, I give you leave to keep my deed of the Clayton house to you. I don't fear your using it much. We are a *leetle* too intimate with each other's affairs, Mr. Lang. By the way, you can open your office yourself to-morrow morning. As for me, I am going to marry and settle down in some paying business of my own."

"You dog, you would not dare to talk so, if it were not for this paralysis. I *will* go down to my office to-morrow, and, if I do not find you there" —

Nelson here pushed the speaker easily aside and passed out. Lang came near having another stroke of apoplexy, so intense was his rage.

The next morning the broker was driven down to his office, but Shallop did not appear. "Does the fool imagine his ruin was not plotted from the first? I have led him to think he was my mentor. Another train was laid for him. Well, the case is desperate. I must make a virtue of necessity, and regain my own good name with the world, making away with him at the same time. One sacrifice will do both. Amelia shall see me the theme of public praise, and must join in it, in her own despite." These thoughts, and the congenial pressure of business seemed to revive Lang.

It was Mr. Shallop's wedding morning, and the little gentleman had risen early. He partook of a hearty breakfast, making his plans for the day over the Eastern stock quotations of the morning paper, which he read from habit. Then he hurried forth, and found himself going hastily toward Lang's office, also from habit. Checking himself, he turned toward the bank, where Miss Garr had agreed that morning to have the three thousand dollars payable to his order. The bank was not yet open. He caught sight of the porter, however, to whom Mr. Lang's clerk was well known.

"Ah! here," said Mr. Shallop, "put that two-and-a-half in your pocket. It may help you to make haste in an errand you will be sent on this morning. Has the teller arrived?"

The teller had arrived, and Shallop was allowed to speak with him a moment. The result of their conference was an agreement that before eleven o'clock, the porter should be despatched to the church where the nuptials were to take place, with a note from the teller informing Mr. Shallop of the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of Miss Garr's part of the marriage contract.

On his way from the bank, Mr. Shallop came very near turning into the familiar street which should lead him to Lang's office, but the idea of his toilet suggesting itself, he had no further difficulty in getting back to his lodging.

Miss Garr's preparations had been deliberate. Four afternoons had been exhausted, alone, in the purchase of the travelling dress of gray poplin, in which she was to lose her name, and (by a pleasant fiction) her identity. Fastidiousness about the price, rather than the pattern, compelled a complete pilgrimage of all the cheap shops

in the city. Then the fitting and the making — “a piece of delegated authority,” said Miss Sophia, “that I do *not* like” — was another matter which also exhausted some time, and much temper; for, the bride, as she liked to call herself, acting as her own mantua-maker, could not achieve the proper juvenile slope to the salient points of her own shoulders. In her vexation she was forced, at last, to employ a widow, who had a small family of six children, and who had seen better times. It might have been for this aristocratic consideration that Miss Garr allowed her about half the ordinary wages for such service.

But the question of bridesmaids was the one which caused Miss Garr the greatest fluttering, and, at last, the greatest chagrin. She had at first asked two or three lady teachers of her acquaintance, but none of them felt called upon by a friendship which they did not feel, and with many excuses, each of them positively refused. Mrs. Leadbetter announced her willingness to act, were it not for “circumstances over which she now had no control,” she having been a bride herself some ten years before. Miss Garr then attempted to bribe the poor woman who had seen better times; but said that honorable though reduced lady, “I have too much respect for my six small children to attempt to palm myself off for a bridesmaid. I may be poor, but I am not a maiden, madam.”

Of course it had been intimated to Amelia, more than once, that as a particular favor, she would be allowed to stand up with her old instructress, on the most trying occasion of her life. Amelia had taken no notice whatever of this benevolence, but had of late invariably left the room when Mr. Shallop called; aware, as she was, of the

important part that gentleman had taken in the late disastrous trial.

This last misfortune Amelia had carefully concealed from her invalid mother, and it was probably a desire still to keep her ignorant on that score, that had prevented the indignant daughter from having a final rupture with Miss Garr.

Mrs. Clayton had come down to the parlor on the wedding morning of her old friend from the State of Maine. Sophia was anxious that Mrs. Clayton, at least, should drive up to the church in the family carriage, to add *éclat* to the great event. "My dear Mrs. Clayton," said her amiable friend, "it may be the last time you will get to ride in the carriage before it is sold."

At this allusion to an approaching calamity, Mrs. Clayton turned deathly pale. Amelia rose quickly, and darting a menacing look at Sophia, passed very close to her on her way to Mrs. Clayton. "Mother," said Amelia, smoothing the excited tremor out of her voice, as well as she could, "had not you better retire to your room till Miss Garr has started to the church? Come, do; bid her good-by now, and I will come after you when the excitement is over, and we will walk on the lawn."

"Oh, let her stay a little while longer, dearest Amelia," said the Garr, returning the daughter's threatening look with interest. "That is right, Mrs. Clayton, my old friend. I should be so lonesome without you, on this trying occasion."

"I will stay here a little longer, Sophia; but you must excuse me from going to the church. I will bid you good-by before the bridegroom comes, and retire then."

Amelia and Miss Garr eyed each other not very lovingly. "That reminds me, dearest Amelia," observed

Miss Sophia, following up her victory, still fighting over Mrs. Clayton's body, as it were, and over the secret Amelia was struggling to conceal, "that reminds me, dearest Amelia, that I am sadly in need of a bridesmaid, and I would like — and in fact I almost insist (here Miss Garr's hard, sharp eyes travelled hastily from Amelia to her mother, and back to Amelia, becoming brighter with the threat intensified) that you, my favorite pupil, shall just jump into the carriage and stand up with me. It will not take a moment, you know, and I begin to get so nervous, as you can plainly see, that I must make it to you as my last command. I am ready, and you don't need the least preparation. Nelson will be along soon, now."

"What do you think about it, my daughter?" asked Mrs. Clayton.

This considerate tenderness on the part of her helpless parent almost unnerved Amelia, such a change had been wrought in Mrs. Clayton. Before the great shock of their misfortunes, it would have been a petulant command. Mrs. Clayton had been led to hope that the law would restore everything. Amelia had only confided her own hopes to her mother at the commencement of the trial. Now she could not — she dared not tell Mrs. Clayton the disastrous truth, at least till that poor woman should have become stronger. What wonder, then, if Amelia did hesitate a moment between her fear lest Miss Garr, in revenge, should disclose all suddenly, and her indignation at this base dallying with a life, for so trivial and selfish a purpose?

"My daughter, will you not say? What do you think of Miss Garr's request?"

"That I cannot, mother — that I *will not*, Miss Garr!"

was Amelia's determined reply, as she turned quickly, from one to the other.

"You shall, Miss!" shrieked Sophia. "It may be because you are jealous and spiteful, since it isn't you who is going to get married; or it may be that you want to make me cry on my wedding-day, so that I may not look young and beautiful; and it may be, Miss, and my dear friend, Mrs. Clayton, I might as well tell you, for she never will, that it is because" —

"Thank Heaven, mother, the carriage has come, and he is at the door. You must not stand here to give countenance to a false-hearted swindler. Come, mother, quick, quick!" and so excited and flurried became poor Mrs. Clayton, that Amelia had her out of the room before Miss Garr could complete the proposed revelation, or bid good-by to her old friend from the State of Maine.

The only luxury observable about Mr. Shallop's attire was a new pair of white kid gloves. They might have been white cotton, which would certainly have been cheaper. This much he thought. They should have been almost any other color in such a marriage. That the world thought. Otherwise, Mr. Shallop was clothed in his usual business suit, as was severely proper, since this was strictly a business transaction. After a very hasty mercantile salute on the right cheek of Miss Sophia, which produced by far the greatest impression on the powder there, Mr. Shallop demanded if everything was ready.

"Everything," replied the bride.

"*Everything?*" repeated Mr. Shallop, referring, no doubt, to the banking affair.

"*Everything,*" again replied the bride, varying the emphasis to the last syllable of the word.

"Where are your brides-maids?"

"They are at the church, Nelson, dear."

"Is that the regular way, for brides-maids to go in advance?"

"No, Nelson, love; this is an extraordinary affair. I shall have, I think, somewhere near thirty brides-maids."

"Thirty brides-maids?"

"Yes, and twenty groomsmen."

"Why, this is extraordinary, indeed; I had only thought of one."

"And where is he, Nelson?"

"Oh, he will be at the church in due time."

The fact is, Mr. Shallop had made up his mind that he would press the bank-porter into that service, or any other service demanded by the exigencies of this marriage business, which, from its remote connection with stock transactions, Nelson did not quite understand.

While the foregoing conversation went on, Miss Garr and Mr. Shallop were wondering why somebody belonging to the house did not appear, to do the honors. They waited and waited — Miss Garr too proud, she averred, to go to inquire, and Mr. Shallop altogether too nervous to be at his ease. Not even a servant could be heard or seen. Miss Garr, finally, looking out of the window, discovered John, the coachman, strapping her own trunk to the back of the carriage which had brought Mr. Shallop.

Without another word, Miss Garr took the little clerk's arm and walked out of the elegant house.

John, the coachman, now stood at the gate, evidently waiting for them.

"I suppose," simpered Sophia, as the couple walked down the lawn, "that faithful creature John, who was always attached to me — and what *can* they see in me to become attached to, Nelson, dear?"

"Your par value — I mean, your inestimable worth," replied Mr. Shallop, gloomily.

"That faithful creature John, I was going to say, must have some little felicitation to offer us. We must encourage such people, you know, Nelson, although they are vulgar. Good-day, and good-by, John."

"Good-by, and bad 'cess to ye, Miss Gi-arr!"

"Playful, isn't he, Nelson?" said Miss Garr, with an encouraging nod to anybody in particular, except Mr. Shallop, or John, the coachman.

"Ye'll come back, no doubt, to be hanged?" continued the credulous John.

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded Mr. Shallop.

"Come away, Nelson, love, we have encouraged his playfulness enough; he may become rude."

"What do I mane, is it? I mane, sur, that Mr. Bane-son, who is a la-yer, has as well as promised to have that auld divil's widdy hanged, sur. And I belave he'll do it."

"Come on, Nelson, the minister must be waiting."

"Yis, go on wid ye! It would be a disgrace to me to be brakin' ather of yer bones widout ye come back. I give ye fair warning, I am going to slape in front of this gate to-night. I have my young missus' orthers, God bliss her; and it isn't for wages I'm serving her now, for I'll niver take 'em. • I has her orthers that nather of yez comes through this gate again, and I'd like to see yez."

Many other remarks of a like determined nature, on the part of the coachman, were gradually lost upon the ears of the "bride" and "bridegroom," who were now driven hastily toward the church. The couple were fortunately not superstitious, or this might have been looked

upon as a somewhat cloudy beginning to their wedding-day. Miss Sophia occupied herself, while in the carriage, by adjusting a large bunch of orange-flowers to her travelling hat, remarking, at intervals, to the melancholy Nelson, that she must have something to show people she was a bride — after the ceremony. “Because, Nelson, love,” said Sophia, “because they might not know. We are so sly about it; aren’t we, Nelson?”

“Yes,” emitted Mr. Shallop, still gloomily. “Are you very sure *everything* is ready?”

“Certainly; but how can you think of such things, when here we are, and there *they* are, with their mothers? Oh! isn’t it delightful?”

Mr. Shallop looked as if he were of a very opposite opinion, when, descending from the carriage, he and Sophia were surrounded by a clamorous brood of from fifty to sixty young children — being, in fact, the entire primary class over which Miss Garr had lately presided as teacher. The orange-flowers from Sophia’s travelling hat were scattered like thistle-down before the vigorous affection of the youngsters. The less hearty, but by no means less obstreperous, who could not get near enough to pull and haul their dear teacher for kisses, were forced to content themselves by scrambling for these flowers as they fell on the outskirts of the noisy throng. Mr. Shallop’s new kids were utterly ruined before he could reach an elevated position on the church steps, and warn the children away. Here he stood at bay, waiting till Miss Garr could fight her own way clear of her late pupils, and their mothers, and their mothers’ friends — all of whom, excepting probably the exceeding number of infants in arms, had come, by special request, to do honor to the occasion.

When Sophia finally reached her Nelson, her face was literally spotted; so much powder and "liquid pearl" had been carried away on the young lips assailing her.

All this time the minister and certain curious people of the neighborhood were waiting in the body of the church. The couple, now locking arms, marched down the aisle, followed by the school children, two by two, and their mothers and mothers' friends three by three, and five by five, just as it happened, without special reference to anything but the front seats. After a great deal of whispering and some crying on the part of the babies in arms, silence reigned; and, the couple standing in front of the altar railing, the ceremony commenced.

The minister had not proceeded far, when a man walked hastily down the aisle, and handed a little piece of folded paper to the bridegroom. "All right," whispered Mr. Shallop, "now stand by to give away the bride."

"Blazes, man!" whispered back the bank-porter, for he it was, of course, "look at me!"

Now the bank-porter did present rather an excited, as well as youthful appearance — to say nothing of his excessive perspiration — for a representative of the bride's father, especially when that bride was Miss Sophia Garr.

"Never mind," returned Nelson, "we are getting along finely without brides-maids and grooms, but we must have a father, I am told. You must, you must!"

And the bank-porter sat down to breathe and otherwise prepare himself against the time when he should be called upon.

"Nelson, wilt thou," said the minister, who meantime had proceeded with the service, "wilt thou have this

Woman to thy wedded wife ; to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony ? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ? ”

“ No ! ” quoth Nelson.

The minister now looked up, clearly manifesting the first interest he had taken in the ceremony.

All eyes, including those of the children's mothers and the children's mothers' friends, and of the curious people of the neighborhood, and of the bank-porter, and of Miss Sophia Garr herself, were rivetted on the bridegroom. One or two infants, awakened by the sudden stillness, screamed terribly ; but Nelson never raised his eyes from the little piece of paper which he held unfolded before him.

“ He must have made the mistake unconsciously, or he might not have heard the question,” thought the minister, as he repeated — “ Nelson, wilt thou have this Woman to thy wedded wife ; to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony ? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor, and keep her in sickness and in health ; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live ? ”

“ No-o ! ” quoth Nelson again.

“ Just because I forgot it. Oh ! ” shrieked Miss Garr, who had done nothing of the kind, having from the first, as will be remembered, decided to buy a husband without paying a cent. “ You horrid, designing, mercenary monster ! ” concluded Sophia, with another shriek. Then she performed the most sincere action of her whole life — in fact, the only *bonâ fide* deed of its peculiar kind on record against that much injured spinster. Miss So-

phia Garr fainted, and fell into the arms of the bank-porter.

Darting an angry look at the unconscious bride that was to be, Mr. Nelson Shallop wavered down the aisle toward the church door, amid the pushes, pinches, slaps, and general vituperation of the sympathetic children's mothers and children's mothers' friends; and amid the wailings of all the primary pupils of both genders, as also the desolate howlings of the full force of babies in arms.

At the door, Nelson was politely touched on the arm by a gentleman with a silver star on his breast: "Mr. Shallop, you are my prisoner, sir."

"Mr. Shallop was stunned.

"On what warrant?" gasped the terrified little man, as soon as he could speak.

"Oh, here it is!" replied the officer. "Perjury is one of the charges."

"I am ready," said Mr. Shallop, huskily. And he was borne away to prison.

Miss Garr was finally restored by the minister's presence of mind and a little water, he having cleared the church first of the children, and their mothers, and their mothers' friends, who had made such a sympathetic and tumultuous rush upon Miss Sophia, that the unfortunate bank-porter fell before it, and came near continuing his journey precipitately to the next world in company with the lady of whose parent he had expected to be the juvenile representative.

Miss Garr's trunk was still strapped to the back of the carriage which Mr. Shallop, not having paid for, had left behind. This reminded her of "that faithful creature" John, the coachman, and his threats. She did not feel

equal to attempt carrying the Clayton gate by storm, especially since Amelia had taken the command of the house beyond into her own hands. Miss Garr was driven, therefore, to the residence of Mrs. Leadbetter. Here she was sure of a feeling reception; because, some late cruel reports having got afloat about Mrs. Leadbetter, and her husband having had them investigated by a judge and jury, a divorce had been granted to that heartless man, and Mrs. Leadbetter had been retired without alimony from attendance at her former aristocratic mansion on Rincon Hill.

Mrs. Leadbetter received Miss Garr with open arms and open mouth. When this additional proof of the inconstancy of men had been confided to her, Mrs. Leadbetter wept sympathetic tears, and Sophia Garr wept other sympathetic tears, and they both vowed it was a heartless world.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HENRY COMES.

SINCE the illness of Aunty Owen, Amos had an excuse for going boldly to the "Seminary of Fashion," every afternoon. Thence, accompanied by Amelia, he would proceed to the little tenement on Telegraph Hill. It was on the day after the events of the last chapter that they arrived at Aunty Owen's earlier than usual. The nurse met them with a cheerful smile, and assured them the fever was gone. The doctor had not yet been there that day, but the nurse felt sure her charge would now get well. "For see," said the woman in triumph, "she is asleep!"

While Amos and Amelia were discussing, in whispers, certain little plans for the future aid and comfort of Aunty Owen, Andrew Gloverson entered. Learning the state of the case, he, too, had no doubt that the patient would recover, albeit the good old fellow in this, as in all cases of the kind, consulted his heart, rather than his head.

As a particular favor, Mr. Gloverson was let into the secret of the plans Amos and Amelia were making for the benefit of the convalescent. He offered certain amendments and modifications, and while they were settling these things among themselves, the doctor's rap was heard at the door.

"The fever's gone, and she is asleep," said the nurse, as she let him in.

"Indeed?" and the doctor, with a bow to those present, walked to the bedside of Aunt Owen.

Then there was a long silence.

"Doctor, is she not better?" asked Amelia at last, approaching the bed. The physician shook his head, but Amelia did not see him, for at the sound of her voice Aunt Owen opened her eyes and smiled faintly.

"She knows *her*," said Andrew Gloverson huskily.

"The crisis is passed," observed the doctor.

"And she will get well?" asked Andrew hopelessly.

"The crisis is passed," repeated the doctor, shaking his head.

"Not yet; see!" said Andrew, "she is reviving. Her hands move and her lips — listen!"

"Water," said Aunt Owen feebly.

The nurse brought a draught, and Amelia offered it.

Aunt Owen motioned it away, and turning her head, pointed feebly toward the window, and again said, louder than before, "Water."

"She wants to look out upon the sea," exclaimed Andrew Gloverson quickly. "She always did. She always sat there by the window. Let us move the bed so she can see the ocean. That's where she thinks her lost boy is coming from, poor thing!"

The bed was placed in front of the little window. As they propped her up on pillows, and she looked toward the distant Pacific, a gleam spread over her face, like that of the afternoon sun upon the quiet waters. Her eye brightened, and she said, in almost her usual voice, "Henry is coming, Henry is coming."

Andrew Gloverson now took the physician to the fur-

ther end of the room, and, in a whisper, plied him with eager questions.

Amelia's eyes filled with tears, but she still sat by the bedside holding one of Aunty Owen's hands. Amos drew his chair to the opposite side of the bed, and took up Aunty Owen's other hand. "Henry . . . coming . . . coming,"—and by a strange movement, in the light of dawning reason and in the attempt to speak, Aunty Owen placed the hand of Amelia in that of Amos.

Then, before their hands were unclasped, a smile parted Aunty Owen's lips, and she said, "Henry has come!"

The smile still lingered about her face, but her heart had ceased to beat.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DRIFTING.

THE grass had taken root upon the grave of Aunty Owen, at Lone Mountain, on the slope toward the sea. The summer mist, coming in through the Golden Gate, dwelt there before passing on to the city, and watered the flowers Amelia had planted. The morning sun quickened them, and the afternoon wind tossed them to and fro; while the Pacific on one side, and the metropolis on the other — two oceans, whose peculiar tides are separated by graves — ebbed and flowed on, as ever.

A new clerk was ensconced behind the gilt letters of George Lang's office window. A private apartment in the broker's safe was the repository of his papers and his confidence, Mr. Shallop's successor being initiated into the Attic dialect, merely, of the stock business.

Mr. Archibald Beanson was present at the preliminary examination of the luckless Nelson, and was not a little astounded, as well as delighted by the revelations there made. He resolved, however, to subject his clients to no more disappointments, provided his own hopes were ill-founded. So Mr. Beanson set himself busily and secretly to work, expecting to bring a joyous surprise upon the house of Clayton.

Meantime, all of Mr. Shallop's attempts to find the heavy bail demanded for his release had been skillfully defeated by Lang, who, nevertheless, grew daily more impatient for the trial to come on which should make him a hero with the world. Even business grew tiresome, and he was more rarely seen at his office. He dared not plunge again into the reckless dissipation which had succeeded his last interviews with Amelia, and which, he believed, had brought upon him the bodily affliction, so common in the climate of California — the skeleton at this feast of all the seasons.

There is a passage in La Bruyère he had read in his better and more studious days, which now kept ringing in his ears: "All of our evils come from our inability to be alone; from that — gaming, luxury, dissipation, wine, women, ignorance, slander, envy, forgetfulness of ourselves and of God."¹

"I must be alone," thought Lang. "Solitude will cure me;" and with the persistency of his nature he carried out his resolve through weeks of torment. He was forced to put off indefinitely his revenge on Dixon, or even the thought of it. The idea of Amos had become so connected with that of Karl's grave, in the mind of the broker, that he could not think of his rival without seeing again the fatal letters on the tombstone.

Lang betook himself at last to his long-neglected books; but it was only to reverse all the brighter conclusions of his youth, and to blacken or obliterate its green memories: for, is not youth a pleasant hill-side, on which manhood grounds a temple or an ash-heap?

¹ Tout notre mal vient de ne pouvoir être seuls; de là le jeu, le luxe, la dissipation, le vin, les femmes, l'ignorance, la médisance, l'envie, l'oubli de soi-même et de Dieu.

It might have been partially the result of Lang's disease, yet it was chiefly owing to his changed nature that, if he read Dante, he found Beatrice a hateful woman apotheosized. Ary Scheffer's picture would swim before his eyes, and it was Amelia, instead of Beatrice, that was crowned, and beyond his reach. "And this was my favorite once," said Lang to himself. "How could I have liked these things? Petrarch was certainly a bigger fool than Dante, to have given the only real love of his life to a woman who let him go to prison, as Amelia would be glad to let me. Yet they say these women made these poets. Nonsense! Give me the times of Ovid and Propertius, who beat, and were beaten again by their mistresses. Would that I could beat somebody! Prior was the only sensible fellow of the lot. His Chloe was a bar-maid. La Bruyère was a fool, too, who got his reputation by saying common things backwards. What does he know about a disappointed — was I going to say lover? Ha, ha! Did he ever see the shapes that follow me around? Did he ever carry a grave-yard in his mind? Then talk about being alone! An anchorite *must* feed on roots and herbs. A full man in solitude would be plagued to death with his own devils. The doctor says I must expect hallucinations with this disease upon me. The doctor is another fool. I must go out; I cannot be alone with Karl's grave upon my breast."

He would not ride, without a friend to accompany him. He mingled in the thickest of the crowd, during the day; and, at night, nothing but his unconquerable pride restrained him from hiring a man to sleep in his room. In his uneasy slumbers he would hear strange voices, repeating slowly in his ear, keeping time with the beat-

ing of his own heart, that same sentence from La Bruyère, and he would fling back and back again the same answer—"I cannot be alone!" In the densest throng, by day, he would sometimes hear men mouthing the same hated dictum as they passed. It came to him in the echo of familiar voices. It rose to him out of the clatter of the crowded street. Carriages, omnibuses, cars, and vans were all laden with this one horrible sentence, and George Lang could not be alone.

"I will go to the play again to-night," said the broker, throwing down the evening paper. "To think I should be forced to see 'Ingomar' twice in succession—that sentimental thing, cut out to fit what is called the power of love, making a polished Greek of a barbarian! It's a lie. Love makes the barbarian out of the polished Greek. Look at me! Love has a mission to reward and punish, has it? Love's mission is injury. It wrongs itself first and its object last. Courtship is a selfish exchange of injuries, in the wish. Wedded life is one prison for two souls—a long exchange of selfish injuries in the deed. I—I'll go to the play."

Lang took his seat in the dress circle near the stage, where, almost unobserved, he could see the entire audience. Looking about him, in all parts of the full theatre, he discovered, in about the centre of the dress circle—Amos Dixon and Amelia Clayton. Lang attempted to persuade himself that he was not at all moved by the sight, forgetting that the attempt itself was the best proof of its own futility. "There he is," thought the broker, "loving her just the same without money; and there she is, loving him all the more for lacking what I have." He turned his eyes excitedly toward the stage and the players. "Well, can the philosophy of this 'In-

gomar' be true after all? Now, this fellow Dixon had me brought back to my hotel that night, and he must have seen the weapons on me as clearly — as clearly as I see Karl's grave-stone now, and yet he said nothing about it to me or the authorities. He certainly knew what I was after," mused Lang. "Could this have been generosity to an enemy; or did he not know that he had a pretty clear case against me; or did he think — the fool! — in this way to escape my sure revenge? This play is a lie from beginning to end, but they" — here Lang looked again toward Amos and Amelia — "are too deeply absorbed in it, and each other, to see me."

The play went on: —

Parthenia. I'll tell thee, mother — I was but a child,
And yet I marked it well; you sang to me
Of Hero and Leander, and their love;
And when I asked thee, wondering, what love was,
Then, with uplifted hands, and laughing eyes,
Thou told'st me how, into the lonely heart,
Love sudden comes unsought, then grows and grows —

(Amos and Amelia heard the rest of this speech, looking into each other's eyes.)

Feeble at first, like dawn before the sun,
Till, bursting every bond, it breaks at last
Upon the startled soul with hope and joy,
While every bounding pulse cries "That is he,
Who carries in his breast my heart, my soul:
With him oh may I live, and with him die!"
So, when old Medon and Evander came
To woo, I laid my hand upon my heart,
And listened, listened, but no! all was still,
All silent; no response, no voice: and so
I'm waiting, mother, till my heart shall speak!

AMOS (in a whisper). "Has it spoken yet?"

AMELIA. "Yes, long ago!"

And it was some time before Amos could catch up the thread of the play again.

The first act ended, the young couple sat gazing down at the orchestra, listening to the music, apparently ; but neither of them spoke till the curtain rose on the second act.

“There !” exclaimed Amos, evidently relieved.

“I see,” said Amelia, unwontedly laconic.

They were both soon absorbed again in the play. The scenes and passages most interesting to them, may be common and threadbare to you, gentle reader ; but when was “Romeo and Juliet” ever old to a lover, and who but a lover ever understood it?

Ingomar. Tell me now about thy home — I will sit here
Near thee.

Parthenia. Not there: thou art crushing all the flowers.

Ingomar (seating himself at her feet).

Well, well, I will sit here then. And now, tell me,
What is thy name?

Par. Parthenia.

Ing. Parthenia!

A pretty name! and now, Parthenia, tell me
How that which thou call'st love grows in the soul;
And what love is: 'tis strange, but in that word
There's something seems, like yonder ocean — fathomless.

Par. How shall I say? Love comes, my mother says,
Like flowers in the night — reach me those violets.
It is a flame a single look will kindle,
But not an ocean quench.
Fostered by dreams, excited by each thought,
Love is a star from heaven, that points the way,
And leads us to its home — a little spot
In earth's dry desert, where the soul may rest —
A grain of gold in the dull sand of life —
A foretaste of Elysium; but when,
Weary of this world's woes, the immortal gods
Flew to the skies, with all their richest gifts,
Love stayed behind, self-exiled, for man's sake!

Ing. I never yet heard aught so beautiful!
But still I comprehend it not.

Par. Nor I:
For I have never felt it; yet I know
A song my mother sang, an ancient song,
That plainly speaks of love, at least to me:
How goes it? Stay —

[*Slowly, as trying to recollect.*

“What love is, if thou wouldst be taught,
Thy heart must teach alone —
Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.

“And whence comes love? Like morning’s light,
It comes without thy call;
And how dies love? A spirit bright,
Love never dies at all!

“And when — and when ” —

[*Hesitating, as unable to continue.*

Ing. Go on.

Par. I know no more.

Ing. (*Impatiently.*) Try — try.

Par. I cannot now; but at some other time
I may remember.

Ing. (*Somewhat authoritatively.*) Now, go on, I say.

Par. (*Springing up in alarm.*) Not now, I want more roses
for my wreath!

Yonder they grow, I’ll fetch them for myself.
Take care of all my flowers, and the wreath!

[*Throws the flowers into Ingomar’s lap and runs off.*

Ing. (*After a pause, without changing his position, speaking to himself in deep abstraction.*)

“Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one.”

[*The curtain falls.*

And the young couple seemed surprised to find that their hands had stolen toward each other, and were firmly clasped under the folds of Amelia’s opera-cloak.

Each expected the other to make the first movement toward a release, and so the hands remained clasped, till

the music struck up. Then their owners seemed so interested in the music that the hands were abandoned to their own fate — which was a closer pressure beneath the opera-cloak.

"Miss Clayton," said Amos, at length, in a voice that she only could hear.

"Well," observed Amelia, still wrapped up — in the music.

"You have always seemed to understand me, Miss Clayton, before I spoke, and sometimes, when you are speaking, you seem to be uttering my thoughts for me. I almost know we are thinking the same now."

"About that music?"

"No; you — you were not thinking — about that music," faltered Amos.

"Indeed? What were my thoughts?"

"That you, like that girl in the play, had made me better than I was."

"Then you were wrong. I don't see that you have improved at all."

"I am sorry," sighed Amos.

"I am not."

The look that accompanied this speech was so vivid a glossary that Amos caught all the hidden meaning, and he stumbled back to the first thread of their dialogue.

"Well, what were you thinking, then, Miss Clayton? Was it not something about the play?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell?"

"Must I?"

"If you please."

"Well, that love makes one fearless."

"What, have I been too bold, Miss Clayton?"

"Who ever knew that you were in love! How ridiculous! I mean that a woman in love does not care much for the Allobrogi or Allemanni of the world."

"Then you are not afraid, Miss Clayton?"

"I am fearless, sir!"

"You must be in love, then! How ridiculous!" rejoined Amos, as the curtain rose on the third act.

Both watched the stage intently, till Parthenia, having taken his arms from Ingomar, and given him her basket, is conducted toward her home, and the curtain falls.

"Miss Clayton," said Amos.

Amelia answered merely by turning her excited face toward Dixon.

"May I call you Amelia, hereafter?"

"Certainly."

"May I call you *my* Amelia?"

"If you choose."

"Always?"

"Always."

Here there was a very feeling pressure of the hands beneath the folds of the opera-cloak, and a long silence — interrupted finally by Amos.

"Amelia, *my* Amelia now, I know that I am a poor guide, but if you will walk beside me trustingly, there'll always be a home — your home and mine — to come to. You will bear the weapons, and I" —

"No, I'll give you back the sword and lean upon your strength — the strength of an honest, manly heart."

Amos felt a choking sensation in his throat; and not another word was said by either, till the close of the fourth act.

"*When, Amelia!*"

"You are the guide, now."

"I have thought," said Amos, "that it would be better, just before you have to leave your old home. Then your mother will have a comfortable place to move to."

"Yes, but that, you see, need not hurry us. I can provide for mother now. I get eighty dollars per month, you know."

"Really, I had forgotten that," said Amos, blushing guiltily.

"It is I that should blush," rejoined Amelia. "Did I not as much as imply that you were trying to hire me?"

"Why, how?" asked Amos, in a louder voice than he had used that evening, for, somehow, his conscience smote him.

"Why, by offering me a home as an inducement to hasten the day. But I don't believe you thought of such a thing."

"Of course not," was Dixon's ingenuous reply, "for that seems a very long time, doesn't it?"

Amelia did not answer; for, by a strange chance, their eyes wandering in their embarrassment to the remote part of the dress circle, had met almost simultaneously those of George Lang.

Even at that distance, they could see a sudden livid flush spread over the broker's face. No further recognition passed on either side. The flush came and went again. Parquette, galleries, dress circle, and gas-lights swam before Lang's eyes. His head drooped upon his arm; and Amos and Amelia looked away, for the last act was commencing — the last act that was, to them, as the horoscope of their own future, so strangely now did their whole lives seem identified with the action of the play. As it drew toward the close, a quiet satisfaction

settled upon Amos. He felt that his old dream was realized. Amelia had beckoned him to the heights by her side, and he had come. The sense of presumption passed away. A perfect love had made them perfect equals.

The play was over. Amos and Amelia went forth with the throng from the dress circle. The boys tumbled clamorously from the galleries. The proud moved grandly from the boxes. The bachelors strolled leisurely from the parquette, and the seats of the orchestra were deserted. The last actor had left the green-room, and the last property-man the stage. The lights were out; the theatre was still; a chill air, laden with the smell of water-color paint, swept in from the side-scenes; and, there, in the far corner of the dress circle, sat George Lang with his head drooping upon his arm — dead.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FINALE, IN WHICH THE WHOLE FIRM PARTICIPATES.

It was a little past noon, and the lawn on Folsom Street was flooded again with the summer sunshine. The birds — two of them now — were singing in the acacias, repeating the same crystal song Amos had heard the first time he beheld the elegant house; but Amos was not there now to hear it. There was an unusual stillness in the parlors and upper apartments, for you would have searched the whole beautiful house through, without finding Amelia or her mother.

An occasional peal of laughter, however, rising from the regions of the kitchen, would have been proof enough that the elegant house was not deserted. In fact, there was an extraordinary number of people assembled in a little dining-room in those savory precincts, and John, the coachman, was holding forth at great length to those collected there around the table. The laughter proceeded from certain "lady friends" of the cook and house-maid, and from six gentlemen all dressed exactly alike, in cut-away coats, white vests, and white neck-ties. These ladies and gentlemen spoke exceedingly bad grammar, but in the matter of feasting they were exemplary, both as regards natural capacity and cultivated execution. John, the coachman, was giving them the benefit of certain personal reminiscences, wherein he detailed his last business transactions with "Miss Gi-arr."

That lady, it seems, had made a desperate attempt to see Mrs. Clayton, and failing in that, had presented a bill for a month's salary. John had taken the responsibility of tearing the bill aforesaid into small pieces, of placing these pieces carefully into the messenger's hat, and of crushing the hat dexterously over its owner's head. Then John, by a skillful movement of his foot, had accelerated the messenger's return to the present residence of Miss Garr. "And," concluded the coachman, "here's one that'll stop with my young missis, whither she's married or no; what's that to me?"

"What, indeed?" asked the cook, who immediately afterwards thought she would do the same as John, the coachman, "respecting, of course," she added blushing, "respecting of our young missus."

The cook, in a word, had changed her mind about the villainy of John, the coachman, since he had changed his course toward her.

"Yes, John, I will go with you, too."

"Ye would, would ye though," replied the coachman, tapping her lovingly under the chin. From this, and other little blandishments that passed between them, it seemed highly probable to the rest of the company that this couple would hereafter go together wherever they went.

"Hillo!" exclaimed John, looking up toward the kitchen door, "what's that?"

"Good day, gentlemen and ladies. I saw it! It was so peautiful. It's all *vorbei* any more. I come away quick, ven Mr. Dixon said I must haf a garriage an' I didn't vant to."

A snicker was stopped suddenly on its way around the table by John, the coachman, who said with much gravity

and dignity : " Yer welcome, ma'am, as a frind of Mr. Dixon's, and no doubt ye air. He's a man as don't forget his frinds, whoiver they air. Dhraw up, till we drinks to the healt of the bridegroom agin."

This toast was stanchly quaffed by the six gentlemen in full dress, who were no less than extra servants employed on this occasion. The six gentlemen in full dress now kept their eyes on the kitchen door, hoping, probably, for some fresh arrival, and a fresh toast to drink.

" Anton gouldn't gum," continued Frau Carpenter, formerly Zimmermann, " but oh ! de pride vas so peautifol, so peautifol ! "

" Trath, she's a frind of the whole family," exclaimed John. " Here's me hand, ma'am. I'm glad ye come. Fill up to the bride agin avery onè of yez."

" We're indeed glad you come," remarked one of the six gentlemen in full dress, as he held his glass up to his eye after the manner of connoisseurs.

" Indeed we are, indeed we are," echoed the five other gentlemen in full dress ; and the toast was drunk standing.

The sound of many carriages was now heard upon the street. " There they come from the church ! " exclaimed one and all, and the revelers hastened to their posts.

First came Amos, with Amelia leaning gracefully on his arm. They walked up the lawn in silence. Yet above the bustle of the carriages without, and above the clatter of feet upon the gravel walk, rose, as out of the summer sunshine, the song of the little birds in the acacias. Amos and Amelia both heard it now, and there rose, as out of the sunshine of their united hearts, a quiet little epithalamium, very much like the sweet trouble of the songs the mated birds have sung, year after year, since the creation.

Arrived in the spacious parlors, Mrs. Clayton and Miss de la Pierre, having kissed the bride, were absorbed in the contemplation of the numerous presents. As she showed them one after the other to Miss de la Pierre, Mrs. Clayton observed, confidentially, "I, for one, Miss de la Pierre, have always said that Mr. Dixon was no fool; and these presents confirm me in my opinion and reconcile me to my daughter's and my own fate."

"Oh laws, yes!" was Miss de la Pierre's reply, "and he is so romantic!"

"But would you believe it, Miss de la Pierre — whist, do you see Mr. Gloverson?"

"No; he just went out into the hall with Mr. Beanson," replied the little lady, all curiosity.

"Well, would you believe it, now?" repeated Mrs. Clayton, "there are those beautiful pearls from Captain and Mrs. Tambol of Sonoma — by the way, Mrs. Tambol, I think to be a very proper sort of person, Miss de la Pierre, and I am glad that my health is almost restored, so that I am able to see her and visit with her, you know. Then, there is even that modest locket from Mr. Beanson. That magnificent silver card-receiver full of gold coin — I wonder who sent that! but will you believe it? Miss de la Pierre, in all this list of presents, there is not a solitary thing from that Mr. Gloverson. Not a solitary thing. I think — well it's no matter, for here he comes!"

Andrew Gloverson had, indeed, returned from the hall at that moment, arm in arm with Mr. Archibald Beanson, exchanging sundry knowing nods and pantomimes with that astute gentleman. Both had honored the occasion with a brand-new suit of clothes. Mr. Beanson, to give him his due, never looked younger in the

face, or less awkward in the body. Mr. Gloverson, releasing the arm of his companion, stepped deliberately into the middle of the parlor, where Amos and Amelia, surrounded by their groomsmen and brides-maids, were receiving the hearty congratulations of the guests. This movement on his part attracted every eye to the portly frame of Andrew, whose elegant rotundity was set off to the highest advantage by the extraordinary fit of his attire. A well-known movement of his neck in his large white cravat impressed Amos immediately that there was something on his old employer's mind. The bridegroom turned and said something hurriedly to Amelia, which caused her face to beam, as with a new joy; and she immediately after said something hurriedly to the brides-maids, which caused many other eyes to beam, and a quick answer to come back from several sparkling voices. It is very probable that all this talking in an under-tone was on the same subject, and if Mr. Gloverson had been listening, he might have heard the chorus of voices repeating mysteriously, "We will, we will!" But Mr. Gloverson, seeing the impression he had already made, was now absorbed in smoothing and tightening his gloves. He continued this operation until one of them gave way under the pressure. Then, not stirring from the position he had first taken in the centre of the room, Andrew Gloverson said: "I have already congratulated you, young people, one of whom is an angel, by the way; but — but I have not (here Andrew's other glove gave way) in fact, we all have not — no, I haven't seen any of us. It might have happened, when I was out with my friend, Mr. Beanson, but we should have heard it, and I am sure *he* hasn't. The fact is," said Mr. Gloverson, tapping his breast to encourage himself in his new start, "we haven't

kissed the bride!" The senior partner of the house of Gloverson & Co., looking about impressively for a moment, continued: "And, my dear Miss — no, Mrs. Dixon, it will not take long."

The jaunty air with which the gallant Andrew now stepped up, took Amelia by the hand, and bent over till just the tips of his lips touched hers, must be imagined. This, however, was the signal for an event most astounding to Andrew Gloverson. For, before the old gentleman had again assumed an upright position, one of the brides-maids, a beautiful school-mate of Amelia, caught him around the neck and kissed him, and, amid a peal of laughter, sprung back into the lovely throng. While Andrew was looking after her, another brides-maid came up from another direction, sprung upon his neck, kissed him, and disappeared. Mr. Gloverson was still looking in the direction of the last disappearance, when another brides-maid performed the same astounding feat. The increasing bewilderment of the old merchant and the merriment of the company kept pace, and were now well-nigh boundless. To cap the climax, at another suggestion of Amos and Amelia, the whole five brides-maids made a simultaneous attack upon Andrew, and kissed him vigorously once more. Mr. Gloverson finally found speech, and it came very near being an unfortunate one. "I'll be," said Mr. Gloverson, "I'll be — I'll be — kissed no more!" and he retired precipitately to wipe the gathering perspiration from his brow.

Mrs. Clayton, whose attention, with that of Miss de la Pierre, had been attracted by this extraordinary occurrence, intimated to her new-made friend that she was not sure about such things. It might be very improper on an occasion like this.

"I would not venture an opinion," responded Miss de la Pierre, "about what happens in your own house, Mrs. Clayton, but really it was *so* romantic."

Not long afterwards the wedding breakfast was announced. Mr. Beanson, approaching Mrs. Clayton, offered his arm, and Mr. Gloverson, still bearing on his face evidences of collusion with Archibald, approaching Mrs. de la Pierre, offered *his* arm; and they joined the little procession now moving toward the breakfast-room. Amos, of course, took the head of the table, sustained on each side by Mrs. Clayton and Amelia. Andrew Gloverson sat at the end opposite Mr. Dixon, with our old Sonoma friends, Captain and Mrs. Tambol on one hand, and Miss de la Pierre on the other. The handsome groomsmen and the fair brides-maids, suiting their own tastes and inclinations, placed themselves *about* the table, very much as the flowers had been placed *on* the table — just where they would most add to the general brilliance of the scene. The room was darkened; and if Amelia, in her dress of spotless satin, and lace bridal veil — streaming from her head like the embodied fragrance of the orange-blossoms in her hair — had been beautiful in the mellow light of the church, how lovely must she have been now in the gas-light, reflected and softened by these garlands, bright faces, and elegant toilets.

Captain Tambol pronounced the champagne excellent, and confidently asserted that he hoped in a few years to make as good Roederer, if not better, at his vineyard in Sonoma. He made sundry allusions to the rich secrets already stowed away in his own cellar, whereat Amos looked uneasy. A severe pinch, inflicted by Mrs. Tambol in a very secret manner, had the effect of re-

straining the jolly captain, or the company might have had the full benefit of Dixon's former maudlin experiences. The captain afterwards averred that he would willingly have given a pipe of his best wine for the pleasure of telling that story then and there; and it is indeed possible that he would have told it, nevertheless, had it not been for the events that now followed in quick succession.

Just as kindly Mrs. Tambol inflicted the pinch upon her husband, Miss de la Pierre exclaimed: "Oh laws! who would have thought it!"

Then little Miss de la Pierre, formerly Stone, discovering that she was the target of all eyes, blushed and subsided.

Mr. Gloverson laid down his knife and fork, looked all about the table, took up his knife and fork again, and resumed his eating.

"Now, who *would* have thought it! It was so romantic!"

This time Amos, as well as Mr. Gloverson, paused and eyed Miss de la Pierre curiously; but she, blushing again, was absorbed in a piece of cold chicken, which occupied the foreground on her plate.

Amos was evidently troubled, but Mr. Gloverson, doubting exactly what to do, helped everybody within reach to wine.

"Oh laws!" iterated little Miss de la Pierre, "but I must not tell!"

"Yes, do — do tell," said Andrew Gloverson.

"Oh! shall I?"

"Not," faltered Amos, "if you have promised not to tell."

This attracted the attention of the whole company to the bridegroom, who also blushed, of course.

"It is something *so* romantic!" observed Miss de la Pierre, at random, while she became more absorbed than ever in the cold chicken. The fact that Miss de la Pierre had again drawn the attention of this entire fashionable company from the bridegroom to herself, was also a very romantic and gratifying fact to that little spinster.

Curiosity was at its height, and the principal of the "Seminary of Fashion" was pressed on all sides. "Come," said Amelia, at last, "you will tell us, Miss de la Pierre, will you not?"

"That was all I was waiting for," exclaimed the artful little creature. "The bride's request absolves all promises to the bridegroom."

"This is bad faith," said Amos, hopelessly. The old thievish feeling came over him, and he resolved on the spot never to deceive Amelia again.

Miss de la Pierre now proceeded to give a lengthy account of her first interview with Amos, and of the whole scandalous affair of the eighty dollars per month. At the close of the narrative there was a short silence. Then there was a general clapping of hands and hitting of glasses, which Miss de la Pierre taking as a compliment to herself, she bowed gracefully in all directions.

Before the tumult had subsided, and probably to relieve the embarrassment depicted on a certain lovely face, Mr. Andrew Gloverson rose to his feet. Silence was restored, and the chubby merchant spoke as follows: "This confirms me in the belief that you are a great rascal, Dixon — a great rascal, sir, God bless you; and I can't stand this any longer. I've got a little speech to make, the first one I ever made, but I am going to make it. (Applause.) Now sir, Dixon, sir, the firm of Gloverson & Co. can't afford to pay a fine young gentleman like you to take

care of its confidence any longer. Your salary is cut off from this day, sir — from this day. (Great sensation. Mrs. Clayton looks indignantly at Mr. Gloverson, and Miss de la Pierre looks sympathetically at Mrs. Clayton.) In the first place, sir, you said, or as much as said, that my own judgment had gone back on me, when, sir, it never did, and never will, sir. I had the ‘Dorcas’ mine developed, sir, and you and I, as you well know, are the only owners. ‘The mine, sir, is one of the best in the country. I have put a mill on it, and it pans out five hundred dollars a ton, sir. The ledge is thirteen feet wide, being all pay ore from wall to wall; and, Dixon, sir, you are a rich man to-day, sir. (Counter sensation. Mrs. Clayton and Miss de la Pierre are observed in tears.) I don’t care a pin for that, ladies and gentlemen, but I do care for the reputation of my own judgment. (Applause.) In 1859,” pursued Mr. Gloverson, “I bought out the New York house doing business with me. That was several years ago, but my judgment told me there was no use painting out the ‘Co.’ in the sign, and there wasn’t. For, Dixon, sir, you are a partner of the house of Gloverson & Co. Oh! you need not start. There is another silent partner, and you’ve got to obey orders. We must be severe with you, Dixon. Your salary is cut off from this day, sir — from this day. (Applause.)

“Now, sir,” continued Mr. Gloverson, fumbling in his coat pockets, “I have a little paper here, which is interesting only to the bride. It’s merely the deed of a house, and I only wish it was large enough and good enough for such an angel. I always said she should be a member of the firm, and now she is, if she will only let me have one little room in the attic, you know, just to hide my old head in. The deed is in her name, be-

cause, Dixon, sir, as Miss de la Pierre says — no, as I say — you are a great rascal — and I can't trust him, for he is a great rascal, sir — Miss Clay — no, Mrs. Dixon, sir, God bless him. (Great applause, which, very fortunately for Mr. Gloverson, gave him time to breathe. His throat, however, was becoming fuller every moment.) Whereas, ladies and gentlemen, that is, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, allow me — though not the first groomsman, or indeed any groomsman at all — allow me to propose my Silent Partners — the bride and bridegroom. May they may they years angel perfect angel and God bless them!"

Andrew Gloverson took his seat, and wiped away — not the perspiration this time, but two large tears, which had filled his eyes to the utter obstruction of his vision. The greatest orator could not have made a greater impression.

The enthusiasm subsiding somewhat, calls were now made for "Dixon," "Dixon;" and, as that gentleman rose to his feet, you would not have recognized him as the young man introduced to your notice, in the first chapter of this history. In the whole company no one's attire sat better, and no one, in his trying position, would have been more gracefully at his ease. He expressed briefly and naturally, for the bride and himself, their overwhelming sense of surprise and gratitude at what Mr. Gloverson had just said. He might be mistaken, but he really believed that his old employer and friend was the best man on earth! During the applause with which this assertion was greeted, and while Andrew Gloverson observed to himself, in an inaudible whisper, "Dixon, you be d—d," Amos looked about the table till his eyes met those of Archibald Beanson. "I shall," continued

the speaker, "call upon Mr. Beanson to respond to the toast I shall offer as appropriate to this occasion. Mr. Beanson, by the way, deserves the especial gratitude of certain members of this company, for the very able and satisfactory manner in which he struggled for an upright, though lost cause. (Here a positive wink passed from Mr. Gloverson to Mr. Beanson.) Mr. Gloverson, however, has stepped in, in the place of justice; and, if Mrs. Clayton must leave this house, she will certainly be led to another as good" —

"Comparisons are odious," interpolated Mr. Beanson; "but the new house is the finer of the two."

"Well, sir," addressing Beanson, "there is no doubt still of an indebtedness to you. I shall therefore take the liberty, as junior partner — no, as one of the silent partners of the house of Gloverson & Co. — to appoint you legal adviser and collector for the firm. See! Mr. Gloverson confirms the appointment. (Applause.) But the toast, which I propose to offer now, is one that has suggested itself to me with a sort of religious interest to-day. I propose, therefore, that we rise and drink silently to our mothers, living or dead. If mine could have seen the triumph of this day — well, Our Mothers!"

The toast was drunk, and it was some time afterwards before the solemn silence was broken.

Then Mr. Archibald Beanson, having been called, returned thanks for the compliments of Dixon, after which Mr. Beanson, artfully taking out some documents from his pocket, continued: "But Mr. Dixon has unintentionally, I am sure, misstated a few facts. I have been rather busy lately, it is true, with the legal matters of Mrs. Clayton and her lovely daughter (applause); but, by consulting this paper, which I now deliver up to Mrs.

Clayton, she will see that this house, together with most of the property left by the late Mr. Clayton, is still in her hands. (Sensation.) The papers of George Lang, lately deceased, were rather too freely displayed by the Coroner to leave the least legal doubt about the present ownership of the property. You will find a clear statement of the whole procedure in that paper, Mrs. Clayton. I need not take up the time of this company with details. Most of the sales were never made at all, as is plainly shown by the papers found in a private apartment of the late Mr. Lang's safe. The money from the other fraudulent sales can, in due time, be recovered from Mr. Lang's estate. I am therefore happy to congratulate Mrs. Clayton on the fact that she can pass the rest of her days in this very house, if she likes ; and, to confess the truth, I should have told her and the present bride a week ago, had it not been for my kind friend here, Mr. Gloverson, who insisted on this general surprise. This will account to the bride for the extraordinary and heretofore unexplained addition to her balance at her banker's. Trusting that I have the forgiveness of my first clients, I shall close, by offering the rather abstract sentiment of Gratitude and Justice : — We all have cause for the first, and reason to believe that the second will always crown the end."

While the company were drinking this toast, Amelia and her mother flew into each other's arms, and laughed and wept by turns.

Seeing which, Captain Tambol proposed, "Everybody and everything ;" and the joy was now general and boundless.

The scene having been changed to the parlor again, Mr. Andrew Gloverson gave full reins to his delight.

He laughed a great deal, and wept just a little, especially when the young couple prepared to take their departure.

When they were both seated in the carriage, and all the good-bys had been said over and over again, Andrew Gloverson rushed out, bare-headed, and, putting his two fat arms through the open window of the coach, took Amelia and Amos each by the hand —

“I may live with you in the new house, mayn’t I?”

“Certainly, certainly.”

“Amelia, you are an angel!” said Mr. Gloverson, solemnly, as he turned toward the house.

“Andrew Gloverson, you are another!” shouted Amos, merrily, through the window, as the carriage rolled away, bearing them on their wedding tour.

Mr. Gloverson turned and looked after them for some time. “Dixon,” said he, with a sigh, “Dixon, you be d—d. You have my blessing, both of you!” and Mr. Gloverson walked slowly back into the elegant house.

Miss Sophia Garr and Mrs. Leadbetter, as the reader may have noticed, were not at the wedding — a slight which both of them felt. To Sophia was the omission of her name from the list of guests especially galling, for she had actually transmitted, as an olive-branch, her unasked consent to be one of Amelia’s brides-maids. She read the account of the nuptials aloud to Mrs. Leadbetter, then threw down the paper in disgust.

“An ungrateful world, Mrs. Leadbetter!”

“A heartless world, Sophia.”

At the next session of court, Mr. Nelson Shallop was sent to spend several years at San Quintin, on very reasonable terms, the State charging him nothing at all for food and raiment.

The steamer for the East, sailing just a week after Miss Garr read this last announcement in a city paper, bore her and Mrs. Leadbetter as passengers. Since the latter's divorce, she had come to share in Sophia's utter disgust with the married state. Miss Garr took what was left of her little earnings back to the State of Maine. Mrs. Leadbetter's destination was not certain. She was sure, however, that there was not heart enough in California to detain her there. "Good-by," said Sophia to Mrs. Leadbetter, when they finally kissed and parted in New York, the sworn enemies of marriage, "good-by, Mrs. Leadbetter; there is nothing gained by it."

"Good-by, Sophia; there is everything lost by it."

"A heartless world, my dear Mrs. Leadbetter; good-by."

"A heartless world, indeed, Sophia, love; good-by."

And yet marriages go on every day in the good old commonwealth of Maine, just as if Miss Sophia Garr were not there. Her missionary labors cannot, therefore, be very well appreciated. It is, however, due to her to say that she practises what she preaches. Sophia Garr has ceased to mine in the affections of men.

But those who have visited Amos and Amelia in their new home, generally go away impressed with a philosophy the very opposite to that of Miss Garr and Mrs. Leadbetter. If you, forgiving reader, could sit at the table on some occasion, when Mrs. Clayton has ridden up in state from the elegant house, to take her seat just opposite Mr. Gloverson, and if you could see the subdued joy in the faces of the young couple when little Andrew, their first-born, is led in; if you could see even Mrs. Clayton as happy and as tractable as her own

grandchild — well, may be, you would believe, too, that love has a mission to reward and punish.

It is in this belief, and in the reflection of these happy faces, that the writer of the foregoing imperfect chapters is about to make his parting bow. Not in the “Dorcas” mine, or in the bales and boxes of the long ware-rooms on Front Street; but in their noble faith and gentle confidence and constant love, do this prosperous house consider their greatest wealth. Deal generously, therefore, with the simple-hearted firm; paying them, if you can, in the goods they value most. And may your drafts, on whomsoever drawn, in the same happy commerce of the heart, be honored always by the love-capital of GLOVERSON AND HIS SILENT PARTNERS.

THE END.





